













# DANCING

## ANCIENT AND MODERN

*By* ETHEL L. URLIN



THE MORRIS DANCE

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*"The smile is the dance of the face, and the dance  
is the smile of the limbs."*

*"When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave of the sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that; move still, still so,  
And own no other function."*

*"WINTER'S TALE," IV. 3.*

*"Lovest thou music?  
Oh! 'tis sweet!  
What's dancing?  
E'en the mirth o' the feet."*

*(From an old Masque)*

## INTRODUCTION

THE result of research into the history of primitive civilisations seems to prove that dancing is the first art, as it is the earliest impulse that takes an outward embodiment. Just as the individual infant makes its feelings known by cries and gestures, so pre-historic man, striving to find an outlet for the various passions which move him, resorts also to these primitive modes of expression.

Dancing, in its first analysis, consists, therefore, of bodily actions conveying ideas in a dramatic form, but even in its earliest stages it is more than this, it is *rhythmic*.

All nature teaches rhythm, which manifests itself in the waves and tides, in the vibrations of light and sound, in the harmonious movements of the heavenly spheres ; and when man began to try to express his feelings by the rhythmic movements of his body, he was merely taking his part in the everlasting Dance of the Universe.

It is perhaps difficult to realise that dancing, as an outlet of emotion, is prior to music—that in fact, the first music was composed or extemporised in order to accompany dancing—yet the origin of many of our oldest musical terms shows that this is the case. For instance,

## Introduction

the words *Orchestra*, *Chorus*, *Chorale*, *Choir*, *Carol*, *Anthem*, all refer in their origin, not to music, but to dancing; and only gradually came to possess an exclusively musical significance. An old poet speaks of “Sweet Music, dancing’s only life” . . . and says :—

“ That when the air doth dance her finest measure,  
Then art thou born, the god’s and men’s sweet pleasure.”

The Greek *Chorus*, led by the Choragus, performed a ceremonial dance in the *Orchestra* (from *orchester*, a dancer, *orcheomai*, to dance) as an accompaniment to the tragedy being enacted on the stage, and the dance was accompanied by singing. Nowadays the word *Chorus* is generally used in its secondary meaning. The word *Carol* comes from an old French dance, performed at Christmas-tide; and the *Anthem*, derived from the Greek word for flower, was an ancient Greek dance, the Flower-Dance. Other musical terms, being nearer in point of age to the dances of their origin, are, of course, still recognised as dances, e.g., *Bourrée*, *Gigue*, *Gavotte*, *Menuet*, *Sarabande*, &c.

With regard to the origin of dancing, it

## Round Dances

seems in all cases to be a blend of at least three principles :—

1. Ceremonial, or religious dancing, imitative of the movements of the spheres, as they were called in the ancient cosmogony.

2. Dramatic or histrionic representations of man's chief passions—Love and War—with other primitive themes as a basis.

3. Mimicry, or imitations of the movements of animals, as an outcome of the belief in animal ancestry.

The infinite variety of modifications found in ancient, in savage, and in modern dances, will all resolve themselves into one or other of these principles, or into a blend of any two of them.

For instance, all Round Dances seem to have begun with a religious intention, as an element of worship, and the farther we go back into the history of antique dances the more apparent it is that they were in all cases survivals of solemn religious ceremonies. Hindu, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, and Japanese dances are certainly religious in their origin, and it was only in their later modifications that they became expressions of pleasure, and existed, so to speak, for the sake of themselves alone. Some prominent examples are the dances of the Nautch girls, or Bayaderes, before their god Rondzu,

## Introduction

to whom they are vowed in early youth as virgin priestesses ; the Dionysiac, and other dances, expressive of religious mysteries among the Greeks ; the Egyptian ceremonial dances, as depicted on the monuments ; the principal circular dance of the present day among the Fellahin, which accompanies the recitation of the ninety-nine names of Allah ; the dances described in the Bible, as forming part of Jewish worship, such as those, for instance, of Miriam, David, and Judith ; and, finally, the many beautiful Japanese dances, survivals of old Nature-worship in Japan—the Sun-Dance, the Flower-Dance, and others, the history of which will be traced in detail later on.

Among those which spring from the expression of the emotions excited by Love or War, are the highly dramatic Spanish, Sicilian, and Neapolitan dances, in which love-dramas are vividly enacted, and some similar Russian, Polish, and Hungarian dances. War-Dances, surviving from the practice of savage tribes, who use them to incite men to bravery and military ardour, exist in their primary form among the Red Indians, and as survivals, among Albanians, Dalmatians, Scotch Highlanders, and other essentially war-like peoples.

The dances of the savage period, imitating the movements of animals, are seen in their

## Modern Dancing

most obvious form in the pantomime, where animal shapes are in use as part of an extremely ancient tradition. This goes back to the time when men executed fantastic movements clothed in animal skins, as in the Saturnalia and Lupercalia of Ancient Rome, and doubtless further back to the pre-historic civilisation which preceded that of Rome, and to whose dances analogies can still be traced among those of some Red-Indian tribes, as, for instance, the Bison Dance.

Finally, we have modern dances, all so far removed in their intentions and aims from the origins here indicated, as to make some effort of the imagination required before we can believe in even the possibility of any connection, and yet all, as we shall see, potentially derived from some primary human instinct, such as Worship, Mimicry, Love, or War, however far evolved they may now appear to be from their original sources.

Modern dancing begins where, the early intention having been entirely forgotten, the art survives solely on account of the pleasure it gives to the performer, or to the spectator ; when the rhythm, the harmony, the grace of movement, the enchantment of music, the delight of motion for its own sake, become sufficient motives to perpetuate, and in some cases to revive, the varied and beautiful forms

## Introduction

which dancing takes at the present day. These dances have not the confessedly symbolical value which they had for ancient peoples, yet they contain an unconscious symbolism, and it is to this latent element that we must attribute the fascination they possess for the modern mind ; although now apparently meaningless, they are rich in the suggestion that once they were full of meaning.

So we maintain that some specially inspired dancer, such as Michael Mordkin—to name only one out of the many admirable recent exponents of the dance—can convey to the sympathetic beholder of his graceful Mercury-like attitudes and movements, a mystical feeling, as of the time “when the Morning Stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” For one moment, a human figure seems intuitively to embody, in its wonderful rhythm of curve and line, in the symmetry of its balance and poise, something of the motion of the Cosmos, giving us a glimpse into the primal joy of creation, even into the infinite bliss of “those solemn troops, and sweet Societies, that sing, and singing in their glory move” ; it realises, in one word, that Harmony which lies at the heart of things, and which ever has been, and ever will be the idea that the dance is endeavouring to express.

**B**

*"Dancing, bright lady, then began to be,  
When the first seeds whereof the world did spring,  
The fire, air, earth, and water did agree,  
By Love's persuasion, Nature's mighty king,  
To leave their first disorder'd combating :  
And in a dance such measure to observe,  
That all the world this motion should preserve.*

*"How justly then is dancing term'd new,  
Which with the world in point of time begun,  
Yea, Time itself (whose birth Jove never knew,  
And which indeed is elder than the Sun)  
Had not one moment of his age outrun,  
When out leapt Dancing from the heap of things,  
And lightly rode upon his nimble wings."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## PRIMITIVE DANCES

**N**O nation has yet been discovered which is so uncivilised as not to possess some form of the dance. Among aborigines, everywhere, dances are described to us by travellers, either connected with magic, or employed to produce the actions proper to war and courtship, being part of the actual event, and not merely symbolical of it, as in more civilised communities.

The Maoris have a scalp-dance, likewise the Red Indians. The Sudanese also dance to celebrate their victories over their enemies. The Dakota Indians paint themselves black, and sing and dance War-dirges to pacify the souls of the slain in battle. The wives of warriors who have left home for the field of battle, perform day and night a perpetual ceremonial dance, to keep up the courage of their husbands. They also think it possible to destroy the malice of their enemies by the exercise of this species of magic. A Dance of Death is known among all savage tribes, on the principle of like counteracting like. They hope, for instance, to drive away a plague or epidemic by the sympathetic magic of the Death Dance. Exorcism of evil spirits is effected by the same means, and Devil and Ghost Dances are for

## Primitive Dances

the purpose of driving away devils and ghosts, and for healing diseases. In point of fact, dancing is good for health, for it stimulates the circulation and exercises all the organs of the body, as Captain Cook found out when he prescribed for his crew a daily horn-pipe. The Tarantella and the Tigritia of the Tigris Valley are curative dances. The Obeah or Medicine-man of Jamaica cures patients by dancing a *pas seul*, and so do the Iroquois and the Veddahs of Ceylon. Other evolutions are used to avert lightning and storms. The Cingalese professional devil-dancer is also a necromancer. Much dancing is specially connected with death and funerals, survivals of this practice having been found lately, even in Ireland. The Sundance of the Red-skins of Iowa was signalised by horrible sufferings and mutilations, and was connected with the ceremonies of initiation for the boys of the tribe.

Many primitive dances are imitations of the motions of animals, and probably originated in Totemism. Imitations of the wolf, bear, gorilla, ox, frog, and many other animals have been found, in connection with the religious ceremonies of the Red Indians. Zulu dances are merely accompaniments to war and hunting. Music, however rude, usually marks time in primitive dances, and in some tribes it is the

## The Wave Meke

chief's privilege to play while the people perform the actions. The Natal Kaffirs have a dance which is executed before going into battle, to inspire martial zeal. The Bushmen hold sticks in their hands by which they support themselves, while they dance wildly with one foot, keeping the other motionless. The Gonds, a hill-tribe of India, dance in couples with shuffling steps. The movements of the Santal women are slow and graceful. The Kukis of Assam hop awkwardly to and fro, with bent knees. The Fijians hold their arms akimbo and jump sideways. The Javanese make expressive gestures with their hands.

*THE WAVE MEKE.*—Fijian dances are called “mekes,” and in one of them, the “wave meke,” the Fijian girls, standing in rows, imitate the movements of the sea, as it rolls in upon the reefs.

First they bend down, and slowly sweep the ground with their hands, waving their fingers to represent the little wavelets, blown by the wind. Then they sway their bodies to and fro, to show the long roll of the tropical wave, until their figures are rising and falling like the breakers. The dance becomes more violent—the wave is dashing up the reef—the girls spring forward, clap their hands, and

## Primitive Dances

sink to the ground with a long musical cry. The wave has surmounted the reef, and emptied itself into the glassy waters of the lagoon. Thus the dance comes to a peaceful end.

*THE SNAKE DANCE.*—In the Pueblo cities of Moqui, on the edge of the Arizona desert, there still exists one of the most extraordinary barbaric dances the world has ever known. The weird rite takes place every second year, in August, and is performed by seventeen priests in a small open court. The priests dance with a peculiar hopping step, each priest having as partner an “antelope man,” holding in his mouth a deadly rattlesnake, whose fangs have not been extracted. The steps of the theme are repeated over and over again, and at the end of each round the dancers discard the snakes they are holding with their teeth, and take up fresh ones. Sometimes over a hundred snakes are so employed, and there is no record of any of the devotees having been injured by a poisonous snake-bite.

The dance lasts from half-an-hour to an hour, and ends when the sun sinks below the desert horizon. No white man who has witnessed it could ever forget this weird and astounding performance. The ceremony is,



## LA DANSE

By JULES CARPEAUX

The Opera House, Paris



## Animal Dances

of course, a sacred one, and is supposed to please the divinities of the Moquis. It is doubtless a relic of serpent worship.

*ANIMAL DANCES OF THE ALGONQUIN INDIANS.*—The Blackfeet tribe of Indians have a curious belief in the protective virtues of animals. They believe that the beaver, for instance, taught them all the arts of civilisation, and they worship it accordingly. They have a ceremonial dance and rite, symbolising the supernatural powers conferred on them by the beaver, called the “beaver medicine ceremonial,” the word “medicine” here bearing the signification of “magic.” They consider the buffalo, bear, elk, otter, eagle, and antelope to be sacred animals, endued with power from the sun, and these animals are painted on their *tipis*, or tents, as protectives against evil. The tents are considered so sacred that, when worn out, they must be destroyed, not sold, or handed on to anyone else. They secure the family of the owner from sickness and misfortune, procure him aid in danger, and have a magic influence on his fortunes generally. The spirit of the otter, or the beaver, or the buffalo, is worshipped as the Lares and Penates were in ancient Rome, and their images on the *tipis* have a symbolic

## Primitive Dances

value and a religious significance. They are an ever-present reminder to the family of their obligations to their tutelary "medicine" and of the protection they may expect as a reward for their strict observance of its rules.

The Animal Dances are a part of the ceremonial connected with this belief. In the sacred "medicine bundle" animal skins of all kinds are preserved. These are taken out, each with its separate song and prayer, and each skin, of elk, or otter, or beaver, is used in executing a solemn dance, with mimic representations of the actions of the animals whose skins are displayed. While singing the Beaver Song, they beat time on raw hides with rattles, to show how the beavers drummed on the water with their tails. In the Buffalo Chant, the women hold up their fingers curved like the horns of a buffalo. Then they take the elk skin, and the women imitate the action of elks rubbing their horns against trees. In the Antelope Song the women hold their hands closed one above the other, changing positions alternately with a quick, graceful movement, in imitation of antelope-running. The beaver skin is used to imitate the movements of a beaver while swimming, and at the same time the women gracefully sway their bodies to and fro, imitating the beaver building his lodge. They

## Animal Dances

dance round the fire with the skins on their shoulders, and by this process they expect to receive the peculiar virtues of the animal represented. The skins must not be allowed to touch the ground. The prayers are of this nature : "I take you, my child, (the beaver) that my husband and children may be free from sickness, and that they may live to be old."

In the Weasel Song, they pray to the spirit of this animal for its skill in hunting and providing food. Every song, prayer and dance must be performed correctly, and if any mistakes are made, it is believed that misfortune will follow. An exact imitation of the animal's actions is essential to the correctness of the rite, which, otherwise, must be done over again.

The Dog Dance is fast and lively, and is the most popular of the "Beaver Medicine Dances." It is a woman's function, in which all the women of the lodge are expected to join, the men urging them on, singing their loudest, and beating time with the rattles. The entire performance takes a day, from sunrise to sunset.

The Sun Dance is a long and impressive ceremonial lasting some days. The "Sacred Woman," who is the high priestess of this ceremonial, has to wear several objects made of the skins of animals, and each time that any

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particular garment is put on, the movement of the animal has to be imitated. The people prepare for this great event by fasting. Then they go out in procession to find a suitable place for erecting their sun tent or lodge. The principal medicine man wears a robe of very ancient origin, made of the skins and tails of many animals and birds, such as the weasel, mink, gopher, eagle, and owl. It is also decorated with a small bell, two shields, and some pieces of wood of the cotton tree. Marks are painted on the back to represent stars, especially the constellation of the Great Bear, and the Pleiades. In the centre of the back the Sun is represented, with a Maltese cross to signify the Morning Star. The face of the medicine man is also painted with emblems. Pipes are smoked together, as offerings of incense to the sun, and to promote good feeling. The whole is a festival of purification, and tribal rejoicing.

The legend of the origin of the Red Indian Sun Dance is as follows :—There was a young Indian maiden named So-at-Sa-Ki, the “Feather Lady,” who, sleeping in prairie grass in the Moon of Flowers, saw and loved the Morning Star. Of this love was born Star-child, in the house of Morning Star’s father and mother, the Sun and the Moon ;

## The Sun Dance

but they despised the bride, and bade her and her son Star-child depart. So they left the sky, and came to earth, and Poia (Star-child) grew up poor and despised. He followed the Blackfeet army at a distance, and he had strange scars on his face, whence he was called *Poia*, or “scarred,” in derision. But, later on, he became the mediator between men and the Power in the sky, and taught men the Sun Dance, which heals alike mind and body. A virtuous woman, who alone can wear the elk-skin robe, is the protagonist in the Sun Dance ritual. No other Indian tribe but the Blackfeet have a dance in which the power and virtue of womanhood is so symbolised. The simple prayers of this tribe are :—

“ Mother Earth, have pity and give us food to eat.

Father Sun, bless our children and may our paths be straight.”

Another prayer is :—

“ Great Sun-God ! continue to give us your light, that the leaves and the grass may grow, so our cattle may increase, and our children live to be old.”

(*From “The Old North Trail,” by Walter McClintock.*)

## Primitive Dances

*OTHER DANCES OF AMERICAN-INDIANS.*—Some of the Red Indian dances are highly symbolical. One tells the whole story of the Creation of the World, and the dancers are dressed to represent the spirits who helped to educate man, and their own tribe in particular. Rattles are much used as accompaniments.

The Pueblos have dances which are prayers for rain. All the movements have reference to the desired end, and the making of rain is invoked by means of imitative magic. The drummers make curious beckoning gestures to bring up the clouds. Sometimes the dancers carry jointed sticks to represent lightning, and others simulate the thunder. Sometimes water is thrown over them until they are drenched, in the hope that their villages and fields may also be drenched with rain.

Before taking part in the religious ceremonies the dancers have to purify themselves either by bathing, by rubbing the body with sweet-smelling plants, by sitting in the smoke from the burning of sacred wood, or by fasting.

The Sun Dance of the Sioux Indians has not been performed for some years, as on account of the terrible tortures connected

## The Cake-Walk

with it, it was forbidden by the United States Government. It was invented to please Wakantanda, the Sun. Buffalo skulls were used, a sacred tree was set up in the centre of the dancing ground, and around it a dance-house was built, where all the weird and dreadful ceremonies took place. The tortures were meant to test the bravery of the young men who took part in the dance, who prayed while undergoing them, and turned their faces to the Sun, saying :—“Pity me ; bring to pass all the things that I desire !”

### *THE HISTORY OF THE CAKE-WALK.*

—This dance was in vogue forty years ago in the Southern States of America. It originated in Florida, where it is said that the negroes borrowed the idea of it from the War Dances of the Seminoles, an almost extinct Indian tribe. The negroes were present as spectators at these dances, which consisted of wild and hilarious jumping and gyrating, alternating with slow processions in which the dancers walked solemnly in couples. The idea grew, and style in walking came to be practised among the negroes as an art. Classes for teaching it were founded, instead of dancing schools. The simple feat of promenading in a

## Primitive Dances

dignified manner developed into the “Cake Walk,” and prizes were given to the best performers, ice-creams and chocolates at first, later on huge decorated cakes. At the end the winner cut the cake and shared it with the other dancers, and the evening concluded with Virginia Reels, Barn Dances, &c. This custom gave rise to the slang expression: “That takes the cake.”

When Florida became a fashionable winter resort, the negroes began to dress in a special style for the performances—the men in long-tailed coats with high collars, the women in fluffy white gowns with bouquets of flowers. From Florida the “Cake Walk” spread to Georgia, the two Carolinas, and Virginia, until it reached New York, where the Darkies organized clubs, and gave champion belts to the best men-walkers, and diamond rings to the women.

*APACHE DANCES.*—Apache dances, the rage of Paris for some little time, are those which originated among the lowest class of Parisian roughs. The name “Apache” was given by a journalist to a class of Parisians who were engaged in a feud to the death, which arose out of a quarrel between two men about a woman. The case caused considerable excite-

## Maori Dances

ment, and all the people of their class took sides, and "Apache" bands were formed, who gave themselves up to lawlessness, robbery, and murder. The name was accepted with pride and has clung to the class ever since. Apache is a generic term applying to the Indian tribes of North America. Breaking an arrow over the head of a woman is a sign of victory or courtship. The same symbolism occurs among the Kal-mucks, who twist a handkerchief round the bride's neck, and let fly an arrow over her head.

*MAORI DANCES.*—Among primitive peoples dancing is far less individual, and more a matter of mass combination, than with us. Rhythm is its essence. Among the Polynesians it has shed much of its religious meaning, and has become an almost purely secular art. Yet it still consists wholly of posturing, of waving the arms and bending the upper part of the body, as if before a shrine.

In the Funeral Dance of the Maoris the old religious significance is maintained ; perhaps also in their triumph dance, and war dance. In an island of the Marquesas group a religious festival is held to celebrate the maturity of the bread-fruit. The men alone take part in it, and dance naked, and whenever a dance is

## Primitive Dances

monopolised by men it shows that something of the old religious intention remains. The War Dance of the Maoris is also confined to men, and is full of energy and frenzy. The dancers' faces take on the appearance of demons ; they thrust out their tongues, roll their eyes, and give vent to fierce cries. The legs are very little used, but one leg-movement used by Polynesian dancers is a backward kick, like that of a four-footed animal.

The Maori *poi-dance* is full of rhythmic grace, but more resembles a game. Like most children's games, it is of prehistoric antiquity. Many games of the Maori children resemble those of Japanese or of European children. In the Corroboree dance of New South Wales the dancers paint broad white stripes down their arms and legs, and crossway stripes on their bodies, to represent ribs. When they dance thus by firelight in their native forests, they look like a company of skeletons, appearing and disappearing, for their dusky bodies are only painted in front, so that when they turn round in the dim light they seem to vanish.

The growth of the art of dancing in Polynesia has been somewhat hampered by the elementary character of the music, but there is no doubt that it evolved oratory in New Zealand, and the histrionic art in Polynesia.

**C**

*" If sense hath not yet taught you, learn of me  
A comely moderation and discreet,  
That your assemblies may well order'd be :  
When my uniting power shall make you meet,  
With heavenly tunes it shall be temper'd sweet,  
And be the model of the world's great frame,  
And you, Earth's children, Dancing shall it name.*

*" Behold the world how it is whirl'd round,  
And, for it is so whirl'd, is nam'd so ;  
In whose large volume many rules are found  
Of this new art, which it doth fairly show :  
For your quick eyes in wandering to and fro  
From east to west, on no one thing can glance,  
But, if you mark it well, it seems to dance."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## ANTIQUE DANCING

BETWEEN primitive dances, such as those just cited, and the dances of civilised nations, there is little in common ; the former is not dancing proper, but can only be compared to the games of children, which are, indeed, mostly corruptions of a very simple and primitive dance. "Sally, Sally Waters," "Kiss-in-the-Ring," and "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush," are all probably survivals of some very ancient marriage-dance or game in England, and are analogous to those found among peasants and simple folk of all countries. Dancing as a finished art, as a highly elaborated product of civilisation, is, however, very ancient in origin, and the dances of antiquity, while equally complicated, were probably much more ceremonious than any that can be named nowadays. Accounts of early historical dances have been handed down to us by many of the classical writers, and are corroborated by sculptures and vase-paintings.

*EGYPTIAN DANCING.*—Dancing in Egypt was ceremonial, and a necessary part of all the most important events of life. A dance was held in honour of the Dead on the Feast of Eternity, and the image of the deceased was

## Antique Dancing

carried in a procession led by dancers. Dances were held at marriages, and in honour of the gods, and accompanied all royal functions and great banquets. Women wore tights, or very scanty clothing, as professional dancers on these occasions, and their attitudes and postures were almost exactly those of the modern ballet. That dancing was a social amusement is rather difficult to prove from the monuments. In most Eastern nations it is done by a professional class, and people of rank do not join in, but look on and applaud. The religious dancers were probably hired professionally, and the Almehs of modern Cairo are the successors of the original Egyptian dancing-girl. If the ladies of Egypt danced at all, it was most likely in private, and the dance was not held in honour as by the aristocracy of ancient Greece.

It is interesting to know that the positions of the feet and hands in dancing, and the postures of the body, have scarcely altered for thousands of years. The toes had to be turned outwards and downwards, and the arms gracefully extended. The *pirouettes* used were those of the present day. The Egyptian dancers frequently employed *jettés*, *coupés*, *caprioles*, and toe-and-heel movements. The instruments used were the Egyptian guitar, the single and double pipe, the harp, lyre, and

THE DANCERS  
By FANTIN-LATOUR Pau Art Gallery





## The Funeral Dance

flute, while dancing and playing were frequently executed by the same person. Masks representing *Bes*, the god of music and dancing, have been found, with ivory clappers for striking together. The goddesses were sometimes depicted as dancing-girls wearing lion's skins, and they were connected with the god *Bes*, who was a lion-headed dwarf. The professional dancing-girl was evidently of very early origin.

The goddesses who were patronesses of dancing were *Hat-hor*, the goddess of pleasure, called "the Mistress of Dancing and Mirth"; and, in the Delta, *Bast* or *Bubastis*, as the city called after her was named by the Greeks. She is lion-headed, or cat-headed, and Dancing Festivals were held in her honour. Sometimes she is called *Pasht*. The cemeteries round Bubastis are full of mummified cats, which were sacred to her. The ancient fable of the Egyptian Proteus simply means that by rapid movements he could assume all sorts of forms, thus imitating the fluidity of water, the vivacity of flame, the ferocity of a lion, or the agitation of a star.

**THE FUNERAL DANCE.**—The Greeks and Romans borrowed from the Egyptians the idea of having, on the occasion of the burial of

## Antique Dancing

important personages, a man skilled in imitating the personal idiosyncrasies and manners of the deceased. The mimic was dressed in the dead man's garments, and, having his face covered with a mask as nearly as possible resembling the face of the deceased, he immediately preceded the hearse. As the procession moved slowly along to the sound of solemn music (probably the *Linus*) he performed a pantomimic dance to represent the most remarkable deeds achieved during his lifetime by the man who was being carried to the tomb.

**THE ASTRONOMIC DANCE.**—This also originated in Egypt. The order and harmonious motion of the Celestial Bodies was represented to the music of the flute, lyre, and syrinx. This dance is clearly connected with the worship of the sun—*Ra*. It was performed by the Greeks around the blazing altar of Jupiter. It was associated with the Dionysiac rites, Dionysos being the Greek representative of Osiris, and of Baal-Peor, the Semitic Sun-god. The Bacchic *Dithyramb* was probably a corrupt version of the astronomic dance. Among the Greeks it was held in high estimation, and Plato and other philosophers allude to it as a divine institution.

## Hebrew Dances

Flinders Petrie observes that the modern village dances in Egypt may possibly all be derived from very ancient Folk Dances. They take place round a pole set up in the middle of the village, in an open space. They are strictly devotional, and are performed at the time of the full moon. The people all stand in a circle led by a professional, repeating the name of Allah (pronounced "al-lāh") with the greatest intensity, and bowing themselves lower and lower to the ground. The word is monotonously intoned in a deep bass voice, which gradually lowers itself almost into a growl, and the pace gets quicker and quicker until the bodies of the performers move in unison like mechanical toys, and they leave off in a state of frenzied excitement, accompanied, in some cases, by actual nervous prostration. This is called the recitation of the ninety-nine names of Allah, or, in Arabic, a *Zikr*.

The dancing of the Fellah boys is hardly what we should describe as such, as the performer never leaves one spot, but stands, merely moving the hips from side to side, crooning a low chant at the same time. Eastern dancing, generally, consists almost entirely of posture and gesture and the legs are scarcely used at all.

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*HEBREW DANCES.*—It is admitted that these are derived from the Egyptians. The first mentioned in the Bible is Miriam's Dance to celebrate the crossing of the Red Sea, which she performed with other women, herself taking the timbrel or tambourine in her hand (*Exodus xv. 20*). The dance round the Golden Calf in the wilderness was an imitation of the worship of Apis (*Exodus xxxii. 19*). Another dance of the Israelite women is mentioned after the victory of Judith over Holofernes. We read that they put a garland of olive upon Judith and her maid, and that “she herself went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women” (*Judith xv.*).

The Israelite women nearly always came to welcome their defenders with song and dance. They thus met David after his slaughter of the Philistines “with tabrets, with joy, and instruments of music” (*1 Sam. xviii. 6*). In a pathetic story, the daughter of Jephthah came to meet her father, dancing, after his subjection of the children of Ammon, little knowing that she was dancing to her death (*Judges xi. 34*).

The most famous instance in the Old Testament is that of David dancing before the Ark. His wife Michal sneered at him for wearing the slight vesture, which was all that was worn under these circumstances, but he showed her

## Hebrew Dancing

that she was in the wrong. It has been suggested that she herself had expected to lead the dance, as the women usually did on these occasions (2 Sam. vi. 14).

The dance of Salome before Herod was probably not of the simple unpremeditated character of Hebrew dancing. It was most likely an elaborate performance, borrowed from the more sophisticated examples of the Greeks and Romans (Matt. xiv. 6; Mark vi. 22).

There are many other allusions to dancing in the Bible. That it formed a part of high ceremonial worship is proved by Psalm cxlix. 3, 4.

“Let them praise His Name in the dance, let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.”

Also Psalm cl. 4.

“Praise Him with the timbrel and dance, praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.”

Dancing was also a social expression of joy—

“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together, for I will turn their mourning into joy” (Jer. xxxi. 13).

But when Israel was depressed by enemies, war, and captivity, we read—

“The joy of our heart has ceased, our dance is turned into mourning” (Lam. v. 15).

Dancing, as in later times, proved a useful

## Antique Dancing

adjunct to marriage. We find, in Judges xxi. 21, that when the men of the tribe of Benjamin wanted wives, and said "What shall we do for wives?" they received the following advice—

"Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, and see, and behold if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh."

This plan they accordingly carried out, and no doubt we may conclude that they began their wooing by offering themselves as partners in the dance.

Lucky people are thus described in the book of Job (xxi. 11, 12)—

"Their children dance, they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ."

Another instance of the dance as a pæan of triumph occurs in 1 Sam., xxi. 11, and xxix. 5.

"Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances, saying—Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands?" ,

The mention of dancing in the New Testament is less frequent, but it is deeply suggestive. Our Lord's saying of the children in the market-place, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept," is supposed to

## Greek Dances

allude to an actual dance of ceremonial intention which was current at the time. (Matt. xi. 17., Luke vii. 32.)

When the prodigal son returned home he was welcomed with “music and dancing,” to signify reconciliation and joy. (Luke xv. 25.)

Finally there remains the dance of Salome before Herod. Many interpretations of the story have been suggested, but it would not be safe to adopt any of them as the true explanation. According to one author, Salome’s dance is executed out of revenge for the indifference of John the Baptist; according to another interpreter, Salome is an innocent girl who first dances in ignorance of the horror of the crime she is committing, and then realises it in a suddenly awakened passion of remorse.

But the story is told without actually suggesting any particular motives, and the sentiments attributed to Salome are purely modern, for in her own day the beheading of a captive was a commonplace event.

**DANCING AMONG THE GREEKS.—**  
Dancing was an essential part of Greek education. Great poets did not think it beneath them to lead the *Dithyramb*, such as Archilochus, or Sophocles after the victory of Salamis.

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The *Dithyramb* was a dance in the worship of Dionysos.

The *Pyrrhic* and *Gymnopaedic* dances were solemn and stately, and were danced entirely nude. Helen was joining in the "Dance of Innocence" when she was abducted by Theseus. This was sacred to Artemis.

"White-armed" Nausicaa is represented as leading her companions in the "choral" lay. Chorus, in Greek, denotes dancing, and not vocal music, which is only its secondary meaning. It is thus that she meets Ulysses. (Od. Bk. vi.) Again, Ulysses is entertained with dances at the court of Alcinous. (Bk. viii.) Dancing in the twenty-third book forms part of a wedding ceremony, a description of which again occurs in the scenes on the shield of Vulcan, where a dance is depicted, called the Necklace, in which youths and maidens form chains threading in and out of one another. In "Lysistrata" there is a description of another called the *Dipodia*, sometimes represented on bas-reliefs. Yet another Spartan dance was called the *Bibasis*; this was a lively measure, accompanied by springs into the air.

The *Pæan* was the choral dance of Apollo. The Choragus, or leader, was crowned with laurel and palm leaves.

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The *Pyrrhic* dance was a war-dance ; the dancers had spears, and imitated the movements of javelin throwing.

A beautiful mimetic dance among the Greeks represented the marriage of Bacchus with Ariadne, and another was a Flower Dance, called the *Anthema*, in which the dancers sang :—

“ O where are my roses, O where are my violets,  
And where is my beautiful parsley ?  
Are these, then, my roses ? Are these, then,  
my violets ?

And is this my beautiful parsley ? ”  
This seems similar in character to “ Oranges and Lemons,” or “ Here we go round the Mulberry Bush.” Other antique dances have the quaint names of “ The Owl and the Lion,” “ The Pouring out of Meal,” “ The Taking Hold of Wood,” &c.

The theatre, with the Greeks, was the temple of a god. Thirty thousand spectators could witness the dances, and people would sit there for whole days.

A remarkable dance was that of the Eumenides or Erinnyses. These awful beings could strike terror even in mimic show.

Lucian, with his usual acuteness, remarks that the Greeks coveted distinction in dancing

## Antique Dancing

to such an extent, that “the most noble and greatest personages in every city are the dancers, and so little are they ashamed of it, that they applaud themselves more upon their dexterity in that species of talent, than on their nobility, their posts of honour, and the dignities of their forefathers.” (*Dialogues : De Saltat.*)—Homer speaks of the dance as “irreproachable”; and Hesiod beheld the muses dancing in the dawn.

The Greeks themselves attributed the origin of dancing to the goddess Cybele, or Rhea, who, on the birth of Zeus, in order to save him from being devoured by his father Chronos, or Saturn, placed him in charge of the Curetes, or Corybantes, her priests, whom she instructed to drown the infant’s cries by dancing and clashing their shields together. This was a favourite subject for vase-paintings. The gods were thought, generally, to approve of dancing, and its practice is attributed to Zeus, to Apollo, and to Hermes; also to the Dioscuri, and to the Muses, Erato and Terpsichore. It is said that Theseus taught the Cretan youths the Labyrinth Dance, which afterwards became a favourite among the Greeks. It was also called the “Crane Dance,” because the dancers imitated the movements of cranes in following a clue held by a personage representing Ariadne.



## DANCING NYMPHS

After a painting by VAN DER WERFF



## Greek Dances

Dances were held in Greece sacred to Apollo and to Artemis, and ballets were performed representing the births and histories of these deities. At the Delian Festival, held every five years in the spring, these ballets were witnessed, and the *Theori*, youths drawn from the most noble families in Athens, offered sacrifices at Delos, the birthplace of the children of Leda. After the sacrifice, women went through movements representing the tossing up of the Island of Delos (which was to be the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis) by the waves of the sea.

Greek dances may be divided into :—

1. Kubistic, or square dances.
2. Spheristic, or round dances.
3. Orchestric, or stage dances.

The Dionysiac Festivals consisted almost entirely of dances, the principal one being before described as the *Dithyramb*. It was often led by public characters, and by celebrated poets and statesmen.

Other dances in use in the Festivals were :—

The *Emmelia*, which was slow and graceful, and danced by maidens. Such a dance was being performed by Nausicaa when she first met Odysseus, and by Helen in the temple of Artemis, when she was surprised and carried

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away by Theseus. This was the noble and serious style of dancing, which was connected with tragedy.

The *Kardax*, which was used as an accompaniment to comedy, and was connected with riotous jollity.

The *Sikinnis*, or Satyric Dance, which partook of both characters.

On the Greek stage, or orchestra, the Choragus, or Coryphaeus, led the Chorus in the dance which was an inevitable part of all stage representations. The Chorus danced with slow steps, clothed in long robes, and crowned with palm or laurel. From the *Pæan*, or Choral Dance of Apollo, were developed the *Gymnopædic* (a wrestling dance), the *Pyrrhic*, and the *Hyporchematic* varieties. All these dances required training in gymnastics and were led by professionals, though people of good birth did not disdain to join in them. The first two named were performed by men and boys. The dancers carried spears or torches, which were used in executing the various evolutions. The perfection of dancing which was attained by the Lacedaemonians, coincided exactly with the rise of their political power and their superiority in war. From their proficiency in this exercise proceeded their extraordinary suppleness, lightness, and adroitness, which

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stood them in good stead against their enemies.

The *Hyporchema* was performed by both men and maidens, and was a kind of mimetic dance, or a dancing and singing game. The *Hymen* was a marriage dance celebrating the victory of the Greeks over some pirates. The Caryatides were so named after some noble maidens of Caryae, a village of Sparta, who carried flat baskets of cakes on their heads, to offer in the sacrifice which accompanied their ceremonial dance. These baskets were called *canea* (from whence the maidens are also called *Canephorae*), and contained the sacred cake, the knife, the chaplet, and the incense required for the sacrifice. This is the origin of the beautiful figures of the temple of Erechtheus, on the Acropolis, which for ever immortalises the enchanting ceremonial dance of the Spartan maidens.

Dances were used among the Greeks, as in later ages, for the promotion of marriage alliances. For this reason the Lacedaemonians allowed men and maidens to mingle in the dance, and even Plato alluded to it as a desirable object for this purpose. There is, however, one Greek tale of a young man who lost his bride by failing to please her father in the dance, which

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is narrated by Herodotus. Cleisthenes, the last tyrant of Sicyon, having been victor in the Olympic Games, gave out a proclamation that he would give his daughter in marriage to the most accomplished youth who should come to his court to display his prowess. The principal rivals proved to be Megacles and Hippocleides, the latter of whom was preferred by the lady. When the day arrived for the final trial of skill, Hippocleides, in order to display his agility, not merely excelled all other competitors in the dance, but resorted to acrobatic tricks in order to gain the applause of the spectators. Cleisthenes, after observing him gravely, remarked, "Young man, you have danced away your marriage!" and the maiden was given to Megacles, and became the ancestress of Pericles. This event was proverbial among the Greeks ever afterwards.

*DANCING IN ROME*.—One of the earliest instances was a military dance, celebrating the Rape of the Sabine women, called *Bellicrepa saltatio*.

Numa instituted the *Salii*, or dancing priests of Mars. There were twelve of these, selected from citizens of the first rank. They wore an embroidered tunic and a brazen breast-plate; they carried javelins, and the

## Dancing in Rome

shields called *Ancilia*, and thus equipped they went through the city, singing hymns, leaping and dancing. During the *Lupercalia*, half-naked youths rushed and danced about the streets with whips, striking all they met, and especially women, who looked upon it in the light of a favour.

Rural Dances were performed in honour of Pan. The heads of the dancers were crowned with oak, and round their bodies were flung garlands of flowers.

At the *Palilia*, or festival of Pales, solemn and magnificent dances were performed in the fields by shepherds, who during the night formed circles around blazing fires of straw and stubble. The *Floralia*, or festival of Flora, gave rise to the May Day customs still surviving in parts of England. It was the corruption of dancing in Rome which led to the expulsion of its professors, and to the low estimation in which it has subsequently been held in European life. From a religious solemnity it degenerated into an orgy.

The Romans, not naturally an artistic people, borrowed the later developments of dancing from the Greeks.

Pantomime originated in Rome, and flourished there until the end of the sixth century. It reached its climax in the age of

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Augustus, and represented everything, even the most solemn and sacred subjects. The *Saltatio pantomimorum* gave dramatic representations, consisting of movements and gestures only, and the two famous dancers, Pylades and Bathyllus, are said to have excelled all who preceded or came after them. Pylades was a tragic dancer, composing his representations from the *Emmelia* and *Kordax* of the Greeks. Bathyllus was his contemporary and rival, and each had their own admirers and factions. The latter was pre-eminent in agility, and renowned for his beauty, so that he became the idol of the Roman ladies. Actresses also took part in the Roman dances of the Empire, and some of their names have reached posterity — Lucceia and Galeria Copiola, for instance.

At one time, when Rome was suffering from famine, and even the orators and public teachers were banished, three thousand foreign female dancers were allowed to remain, so necessary was this amusement considered to be for the welfare of the city.



*“ Kind Nature first doth cause all things to love,  
Love makes them dance and in just order move . . .  
Learn then to dance, you that are princes born,  
And lawful lords of earthly creatures all ;  
Imitate them, and therefore take no scorn,  
For this new art to them is natural,  
And imitate the stars celestial :  
For when pale Death your vital twist shall sever,  
Your better part must dance with them forever,”*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## S A C R E D   D A N C E S

**I**T has been fairly maintained that dancing was connected at a very early period with Church ceremonials, and that the dances still executed at Seville, and at the shrine of St. Willibrord, are survivals from a time when dancing formed a regular religious practice.

It was not without strong protests on the part of the early Christian Fathers, and many repeated attempts at suppression on the part of the authorities, that these dances held their ground until the fifth or sixth centuries, and then began to be gradually extinguished as a more serious ideal of Christian worship prevailed. No doubt these dances, with hymns, and other heathen survivals, were tolerated at first as a concession to peoples to whom dancing had been an essential element in the ceremonies of religion.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by the bishops, notably by Bishop Odo of Paris in the twelfth century, to suppress all ecclesiastical dances, they were practised in a modified form until comparatively lately. They survived longest in France, for even so late as 1683 Père Ménestrier had seen the Senior Canon leading the choir in a circular dance

## Sacred Dances

in a church in Paris. At Limoges the deacons danced on Christmas Day after vespers, and a *Festum Asinorum* was held in the Churches of Sens and Rouen, accompanied by the tossing of a ball. At Besançon up to 1738 there was a church dance called *Bergerette*.

Then followed the mediæval dancing mania. Various accounts remain of this curious phenomenon, which broke out spasmodically in different places at intervals during the Middle Ages. St. Vitus was a patron of nervous diseases, and his dance was originally of the curative order. The longest to survive was the dance of St. Willibrord, the Apostle of Friesland, which still exists at the present day. It takes place at his shrine at Echternach, in the Ardennes, for the cure of nervous diseases, and has been practised since the seventh century. Thousands of pilgrims may be seen, chiefly local, but also many from other countries, walking in procession eight abreast, and holding sticks or kerchiefs which they wave to enable them to keep the regulation step. At a certain distance from the shrine they begin to dance with a gliding motion to a traditional tune, and take about four hours in the performance.

The *Tarasque* is a pantomime dance of Provence, symbolising the conquest of St.

## The *Carole*

Martha over the Monster, a huge effigy of it being carried in the procession.

The dances of St. Jean and of St. Walpurgis are, of course, survivals of the old pagan festivals of the Summer Solstice, and have been described in a mediæval ballad. The *Carole* has been alluded to in the *Romance of the Rose*. Chaucer says of the Parish Clerk :—

“ In twenty manners he could skip and dance  
After the Schole of Oxenfordé tho’,  
And with his leggés casten to and fro.”

The word *Carole* means a circle, and this name was given by the Trouvères to a dance in which men and women held hands, and moved round slowly in a circle, singing songs. In the “Doctrine des Filles,” a French Abbé, gives the following rules :—

“ Fille, quant serez en Karolle,  
Dansez gentiment par mesure,  
Car quant fille se demésure,  
Tel la voit la tient pour folle,” &c.

Dancing still forms an important part of the Breton Pardons. After the bells have been tolled, Mass said, and the statues of the Saints decorated and clad in national dress, and after offerings have been made to them

## Sacred Dances

of corn, flax, sheepskins and cakes, dancing is inaugurated to the sound of the national *binyou* round a moss-grown dolmen, in the true mediæval spirit of gaiety and gravity combined.

*THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.*—It may be a surprise to some to find that the word Carol is derived from the old French *Carole*, which was “the name given by the Trouvères to a dance in which the performers moved slowly in a circle, singing as they went.” There is an old carol in Cornwall, sung by the peasants eighty years ago, which alludes to a heavenly dance, an idea which goes back to the very earliest ages of Christianity. The carol, in fact, is a Christian version of the Greek chorus.

That the Angels dance is an old belief, and is constantly set forth by the old Italian masters, including Fra Angelico.

In this holy dance, Christ is the chorus leader, the Tenth or Perfect Number, who sings to all the nine choirs of Angels in turn, while they sing back to Him their chants of praise in antiphon.

The early Christians allowed mystical dances in their churches, as we know by tradition. But abuses crept in, and gradually they had



## DANCE THROUGHOUT THE AGES

By AIMÉ MOROT

Fresco in the Hotel de Ville, Paris



## Dances of Angels

to be abolished, only surviving here and there. The part of the church called the *choir* (derived from *chorus*) is an historical witness to the fact. The cosmic mystery of creation is signified by this dance, which is constantly alluded to by the early Christian Fathers, who call it the "Cosmic Mystery of the Church." But a still more ancient origin is indicated in an early Christian apocryphal gospel incorporated with the *Acts of John*, called the *Hymn of Jesus*. It states that the Apostles, holding hands, with Our Lord in the midst, circled slowly round Him singing a hymn ; that this elect enclosure protected the Church from the outer world, and that within this mystic circle the Holy Office proceeds, the neophytes, or new-born, personifying the "*Sophia*" (or church), and the Hierophantes or Initiator representing Christ. The words of Our Lord, "I piped unto you, and ye would not dance," are supposed to refer to this mystery. This is the earliest Passion Play, or Mystery Dance of the Passion, also the first and original Carol, and it symbolises the sacramental union of the human with the Divine.

(*G. R. S. Mead, "The Quest," Oct., 1910.*)

*DANCE OF ANGELS.*—The dance of the angels in Botticelli's famous picture of the

## Sacred Dances

Nativity has been said to refer to the tradition that Angels dance in a circle for joy. The idea of dances in Heaven has, indeed, existed from very early days. Saint Basil, we find, told his hearers that as dancing would be their principal occupation in Heaven they had better practise it on earth—and with reference to a part of Fra Angelico's picture of the Last Judgment, the following beautiful verses have been quoted :—

“ Dance they in a ring in Heaven,  
All the Blesséd in that garden,  
Where the love divine abideth,  
Which is all aglow with love.

“ In that ring dance all the Blesséd,  
In that ring dance all the Angels.  
Go they all before the Bridegroom,  
Dancing all of them for love.

“ In that court is joyfulness  
Of a love that's fathomless.  
All of them go to the dancing  
For the Saviour whom they love.

(“ *Il Ballo dei Angeli*,” from the *Italian*.)

## Later Religious Dances

*RELIGIOUS DANCES IN LATER TIMES.*—In addition to the dance now surviving in the Cathedral of Seville, it was customary for the people of Limoges to dance in the Church of St. Leonard, on the festival of St. Martial. Also there was a dance in Toledo Cathedral, said to have been instituted by St. Isidor of Seville, and revived by Cardinal Ximenez. It was known as the Mussarabic Mass of Toledo.

A mediæval book called the *Dieta Salutis* is the probable source of Dante's description of the symbolical dance of the Blessed in Paradise. At Barjols in Provence a triple dance is danced at Mass on St. Marcel's day.

The Kollo Dance (or Kolo) is seen depicted on very ancient tombs of the Bogomiles in Dalmatia, archaic in type; it must therefore have been of ancient religious origin.

Among other religious dances surviving in Europe may be mentioned the *Guglia de S. Paolino*, celebrated on June 26 at Nola, near Naples, to commemorate the arrival of the Saint, who was welcomed on his return from captivity in a foreign land by a dancing procession. An analogy to this may be found in England, when St. Aldhelm on his return from Rome was similarly welcomed by his people, "who praised him in the dance."

## Sacred Dances

The dance of St. Carlo Borromeo, in Lisbon, was also commemorative of a ceremony of welcome. Gaston Vuillier says that Mohammed instituted the dancing dervishes in imitation of the Christian practices of his time, but it is more probable that the dancing dervishes are successors of a very ancient order of priests of the original sun-worship, or possibly planetary worshippers, such as even now exist among the Sabeans.

Strolling Ballets were universal in Europe in the Middle Ages. These were originally pagan, but were adopted into Christianity, and prevailed especially in Spain. There is a dance of the *Cosiers* at Alaro, in the Balearic Isles. Six boys dressed in white assemble on the Feast of the Assumption (August 15th). They are adorned with ribbons of various colours, and wear caps trimmed with flowers ; one is called *La Dama* and carries a fan ; another is a demon with horns ; they fight together, the demons are driven off, and they end by dancing round a statue of the Virgin. A performance curiously analogous to this takes place in the mining districts of Chili during May, the month dedicated to the Virgin. It is called *el Baile de Pifano*, and is danced by men clad in white smocks, wearing hats crowned with looking-glasses. One in red is called *el Diablo*,

## Dramatic Ballets

and they proceed round the churches from chapel to chapel, and from altar to altar, in a shuffling position, heads bent and knees nearly touching the chest, for hour after hour, accompanied by a primitive one-noted instrument. Dramatic ballets succeeded those of the Middle Ages, and were given on solemn occasions. For instance, the Council of Trent gave a ballet in which churchmen took part, representing the capture of Troy. A ballet was given in honour of the Canonisation of St. Ignatius Loyola in 1609. Père Ménestrier, who wrote an interesting book on dancing, gives other examples. In his *Traité des Ballets* (1682), he says that he has seen the canons and choristers on Whitsunday take each other by the hand and dance while they sang hymns of jubilation, and he refers his readers to examples then existing of several ancient churches, where the theatrical form of the choir was still retained.

Gallini relates that "not long ago at Limoges, the people used to dance the Round in the choir of the church, which is under the invocation of their Guardian Saint, and at the end of each psalm, instead of the "Gloria Patri," they sang :—

"*St. Marcel, pray for us, and we will dance in honour of you.*"

## Sacred Dances

To this day Spain has retained the use and practice of dancing in her churches on certain occasions of solemn processions, and theatrical representations are arranged expressly for great festivals under the name of *Autes Sacramentales*.

Funeral dances were in all probability originally part of a religious service. The *Jota* in Spain is referred to later on, and the Wakes held in Ireland had a similar origin, though afterwards abused. The Catholics of South America still hold a funeral dance after the death of a child or a young girl.

The extract now to be quoted gives a beautiful summary of the meaning of the mediæval religious dance :—

“The following lines are an almost literal rendering of a little bit of folk-song from French Flanders. They were sung to the accompaniment of peculiar ceremonies at the funeral of a young girl :—

“ ‘ Up in heaven they dance to-day,  
Alleluia,  
The young maidens dance and play,  
They sing as they dancing gœ,  
Benedicamus Domino,  
Alleluia, Alleluia.

## Funeral Dances

“ ‘ ‘ Tis for Rosalie they sing,  
Alleluia,  
She has done with sorrowing,  
So we dance, and we sing so,  
Benedicamus Domino,  
Alleluia, Alleluia.’

This was called ‘ La Danse des Jeunes Vierges.’  
So late as 1840, a traveller heard it sung by the  
lacemakers of Bailleul. He wrote :—

“ ‘ La cérémonie religieuse terminée, et  
le cercueil descendu en terre, toutes les  
jeunes filles, tenant d’une main le drap  
mortuaire, rétournèrent à l’église, chantant  
la Danse des Jeunes Vierges, avec une verve,  
un élan, et un accent rythmique, dont on  
peut se faire difficilement une idée, quand on  
ne l’a pas entendu.’

‘ Alleluia,’ is, of course, the song of home-  
coming. ‘ Alleluia ’ is Dante’s beautiful verb.  
He speaks of the Blessed at the Resurrection,

“ ‘ La rivestita voce alleluando.’ (*Purg.* xxx.,  
15.)

“ The point, however, we wish to notice in  
this fragment of folk-song is the preservation  
of the ancient expression of religious joy by  
the image of a dance. There is no idea of

## Sacred Dances

motion allied to the endless music of the present conventional heaven. The popular hymns speak of it as a banquet, a feast, as anything you like, but never as a dance. But yet what simile for blessedness can be compared with that of joyful motion ? It is only since the sixteenth-century break with the inherited religious experience of mankind that the dance has been looked upon as profane, and unfitted to be the expression of worship and sacred joy. For instance, let us take Dante. A commentator describes the ‘dance’ as ‘the rhythmic movement which Dante attributes to the Blessed as the index of their felicity.’ The reader will remember how, after the poet had been plunged into the water of Lethe to the strains of the ‘Asperges me,’ his Lady introduced him into the earthly Paradise.

“ ‘ Dentro alla danza delle quattro belle.’  
(*Purg.* xxx., 103.)

—her four handmaidens, who here were nymphs and stars in heaven. Again, the spirits whom he heard chanting the heavenly Sanctus, while they sang

“ ‘ Mossero a sua danza,  
E, quasi velocissime faville  
Mi si velar di subita distanza.’ (*Par.* vii., 7.)

## Heavenly Dances

Once more, he describes the ‘carols’ woven by the heavenly dancers. They danced in such various measure that some seemed to stand still and some to fly (*Par.* xxiv.). The word ‘carol,’ which Dante uses repeatedly, means, of course, a singing dance. Even in the restricted sense in which we now use the word, a carol is the purest expression of religious mirth and blitheness. In the Middle Ages, the angels of Christmas, for instance, as we may see in Fra Angelico’s or Botticelli’s pictures, not only sang, but danced. This came down from all tradition, Pagan, Christian, Jewish, and seemed to be, as indeed it is, the most natural thing in the world. To show that this dancing of Fra Angelico’s blessed souls or Dante’s angels was no mere private fancy of their own, one need only mention the Preface of a Syrian liturgy, where the ‘dances of the Virtues’ are introduced as a matter of course among the songs of the angels and all those other adorations of the Heavenly Host of which the Prefaces of all liturgies speak. The ancient world knew little of music apart from joyful, rhythmic motion, and did not banish the latter from its sacred solemnities.

“A dancing procession takes place every year near Grenoble to commemorate the simultaneous recovery of all the invalids in the

## Sacred Dances

town during a procession in the sixteenth century. One sees the scene ; the arrival of the joyful news, the benign and portly father clapping his hands, and saying : ‘Qu’*on danse*,’ the sudden striking up of flutes and fiddles, and the spontaneous outburst into joyful agitation. In the sixteenth century this would still seem a carrying-out of the apostle’s advice : ‘Is any man merry ? let him sing psalms.’ (*R. L. Gales, in “The Nation,” March, 1911.*)

The *Lou Gué* was a strolling ballet, invented by King Réné of Provence. It was a Corpus Christi procession with mythological characters, first performed in 1462, and revived in 1805 by Pauline Bonaparte.

Gods and goddesses, nymphs and satyrs, trooped in, ending with the grim figures of the three Fates. Then devils came, surrounding Herod, and Jews surrounding the golden calf. The Queen of Sheba, the Magi, the Innocents, and finally a fearful figure of Death, were all portrayed. King Réné, himself a troubadour, invented all the music for this pageant, the best known air being the “Air des Luttes.” This was the Festival of Aix in Provence.

Here we have a transitional dance, indicating the change from the religious dance proper, to the secular representation of mythological

## An Ethiopian Dance

figures, which marked the later mediaeval epoch and the period of the Renaissance, when the old Roman ballets, masques, and pantomimes were revived in all their glory. The mingling of both sorts of characters is curious, and shows the spirit of the age.

The *Danse Macabre*, or Dance of Death, is named after the Saint Macarius, to whom it was dedicated. It became known after a great outbreak of the Black Pest, and was perhaps designed to convey a moral lesson, but it degenerated into a wild orgy. The *Danse Macabre* was said to have been performed in a cemetery by people who were actual sufferers from plague, war, and famine. Dressed to typify all grades of society, from the highest to the lowest, they were led by a skeleton (so-disguised) who employed the most weird and frightful antics, Holbein's "Dance of Death" on the Bridge at Lucerne being no exaggeration of this ceremony.

*THE RELIGIOUS DANCE OF ETHIOPIA.*—A dance of the priests takes place at Trinity Church, *Addis Ababa*, which the Emperor Menelik often attends. The church is circular, and contains a Holy of Holies, which the priests alone are allowed to enter. Twenty priests assemble in an outer passage and form

## Sacred Dances

two rows facing each other. Their vestments consist of brown blankets, or the national *shamma*, a dingy white cloak with a broad band of scarlet, and high white turbans. Each holds a long crutch tipped with a brass knob, or carved ivory handle. A small boy accompanies by reading the Epistle and Gospel. They all sing loudly through their noses. The crutches are held in the middle, and are darted at the ground with a forward movement made by slightly bending the right knee. Then they all lift a foot into the air, poised, and swing to right and left, and dart at the matting, the exercise growing faster and faster, till all suddenly stop.

In half an hour rattles are handed to the priests, and these are shaken carelessly, so that the metal discs jingle. All of a sudden these stop also.

On a great Festival, a dance like a quadrille and minuet combined is gone through. The priests advance in two sections, and bow to the Emperor; then a square is formed, the crutches are waved, the rattles are rattled, and occasionally the performers pirouette on one foot. It is not ungraceful, but it is monotonous.

*THE DANCE OF THE SEISES.*—This



LA CARMENCITA  
By JOHN SARGENT, R.A.  
Musée du Luxembourg, Paris



## The Dance of the Seises

takes place in Seville Cathedral three times a year, during the Octaves of the Immaculate Conception, Corpus Christi, and Holy Week.

A legend attributes the origin of the dance to an incident which occurred during an invasion of the Moors. The priests were engaged in removing the precious treasures of the Cathedral to a safer place, when a band of Moors, who had been despatched to loot, stopped to watch some children performing a country dance outside the Cathedral. The children, realising the importance of delay, went on dancing longer and longer, in order that the priests might have more time to convey the treasure away. Afterwards it was determined to commemorate the occasion by a religious dance. Amid picturesque surroundings, the *Seises* form up in two rows of five. *Seis* means six, so the others are merely supernumeraries. For Corpus Christi they wear scarlet silk dresses, on other occasions blue, trimmed with gold. The music has an old-world quality, and is taken up by the boys' voices, not very melodiously. The dance is a kind of *Pavane*, the boys slowly swaying, and advancing towards each other; then each one executes a piroouette, and swings back to the original position, till a square is formed.

## Sacred Dances

They conclude with a quick figure accompanied by castanets, and end abruptly.

*DANCING DERVISHES.*—These no longer perform in Cairo, but they may still be seen at Scutari, Constantinople. They are Moham-madan monks, and the dancing and bowing ceremony takes place in a square room with a gallery round it. The chief stands with his back to the east, facing the others, eighteen to twenty in number. They come up to him in single file and receive a blessing. The chief wears a flowing black gown, the others similar gowns of blue and green stuff, and turbans, or skull-caps. Prayers and readings from the Koran take place, and the Dervishes then stand in a row facing the east, various movements being gone through, while they recite the ninety-nine names of Allah. The litany is accompanied by a rhythmical motion of the body, swaying backwards and forwards and to each side, the motion growing ever faster and faster. The recitation grows louder, and ends in a cry like the growl of a wild beast. Towards the end, many are foaming at the mouth, and sometimes they fall in a fit. The next move-  
ment is turning rapidly to right and left, keeping up a springing motion with the heels and toes, and still reciting the ninety-nine

## Whirling Dervishes

names. The Whirling Dervishes are at Pera ; there are thirty-two of them, each whirling separately, and spinning like a top. The motion is so hypnotic they occasionally go to sleep during the performance.

*"Dancing is Love's proper exercise . . .  
For Love's smooth tongue the motes such measure  
taught  
That they joined hands, and so the world was wrought."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## SOME EUROPEAN DANCES

H AVELOCK ELLIS says, in *The Soul of Spain*: “Dancing is something more than an amusement in Spain. It is part of that solemn ritual which enters into the whole life of the people. It expresses their very spirit.”

Spanish dancing in many respects recalls echoes of the dances of the old Greeks. Castanets, which we are accustomed to think of as exclusively Spanish, were also used in Greek dances, as we know from the vase-paintings, and references in literature, with many of the movements which we imagine to be peculiar to Spain.

Even in their costumes, the modern Spanish dancers show an affinity with ancient Greece, and the custom of the spectators of keeping time by clapping their hands in rhythm seems to be another survival. Spanish dancing is also allied to that of Ancient Egypt. The Spanish stringed instruments resemble those of North Africa, and the Spanish cymbals are exactly like those used 2,000 years ago in Egypt, as we can see by comparing them with examples now lying beside the mummy of Ankh-Hāpi, a musician of Thebes, in the British Museum.

## Some European Dances

Spanish dancing includes the three principal varieties, namely :—

(1) Dancing in which the legs are chiefly made use of, prevailing in Europe generally, and finding its most pronounced form in the orthodox ballet.

(2) Dancing in which the arms and hands are chiefly used, carried to high perfection by the Javanese and also in Japan.

(3) Dancing in which the muscles of the body play the chief part, as seen in Africa and Western Asia.

In the Spanish dance, every part of the body takes a share, though perhaps the feet are the least conspicuous of all, a contrast to the Italian ballet, in which the marvellously trained feet often seem to support a motionless body.

One characteristic of Spanish dancing is the part the spectators take in the performance. In *flamenco*, or gipsy dancing, especially, the lookers-on clap, stamp their feet, and give vent to prolonged cries, while at the end of the dance there is often no sound of applause, for the relation of performer and public has ceased to exist. It is a fact that the finest Spanish dancing cannot take place before an indifferent audience.

If France is the nursery of dancing, Spain is its true home. Spanish dances are actually of



## BEFORE THE BULL FIGHT

By A. Zo



## Spanish Dancing

great antiquity, and owing to the conservative nature of the people, have been handed down unimpaired to the present day. In the days of Imperial Rome, the most famous ballet dancers came from Cadiz. The Eastern blend in Spain, which must have been there even before the Moorish conquest, gives to the limbs a suppleness and languor mixed with ardour in action, which no other people possess in the same degree.

Mediaeval religious dancing flourished in Spain, and many forms from the tenth and twelfth centuries have been preserved. Under Philip IV. dancing became a Court amusement, and foreign dances were introduced.

Among the national dances are the *Jota*, which is even now executed at funerals, before the corpse of a child. It is the national dance of Aragon, and is dignified yet lively. Gustave Doré has illustrated this subject. The castanets are clinked, and the evolutions express joy.

The *Cachuca* is in triple time; it is a light and graceful solo dance.

The *Jaleo de Jerez* is a wild gipsy dance.

The *Saraband* is danced by women to the guitar.

*Danzas* are slow and dignified.

*Bailes* are lively and the whole body is employed in their movements.

## Some European Dances

No dance has ever been more popular in its day than the Spanish *Fandango*. Partners stand opposite to one another in lines, holding castanets. It was said that the dance was condemned by a consistory of the Church, and in order to judge it, before condemning it, a row of prelates watched the movements of two performers, one of each sex, who appeared before them. Their grace and vivacity drove the frowns from the brows of the Fathers. One by one, their Eminences beat time with hands and feet, and gradually, tradition says, rose and joined the dancers. The *Fandango* was pardoned and restored to favour.

The *Bolero* is not an ancient dance. It is for two people, and has five parts :—

The *Paseo*, the *Diferencia*, the *Traversia*, the *Finale*, and the *Bien parado*.

It is generally in duple time, a slow and gliding step. The woman's part is more expressive than the man's in this dance.

The *Seguidillas* is similar to the *Fandango* and the *Bolero*—an action dance. At the finale the performers stand as if petrified in certain attitudes. Little love-verses called *coplas* accompany each figure. It originated in La Mancha, and is mentioned in “*Don Quixote*.”

## Slavonic Dances

*SLAVONIC DANCES.*—The country dances of Russia have nothing in common with those in other parts of Europe. There is no whirling or leaping, but the action is slow and dramatic, and usually embodies a love-story. The man bows profoundly, following the woman, who walks gently with a tender expression, waving her handkerchief and beckoning him on, and the performers sing an improvised song, expressing the action. This is more akin to the Chinese, Mongol, and Tartar methods.

The *Pletonka*, or the *Braid*, is similar to the Greek Chain Dances. After the performance, the whole troupe sinks on to the grass, and remains there in silent ecstasy.

In the *Khorovodi*, a circular wedding-dance, girls crowned with flowers are the performers, and they enact a love story. One of the girls represents a young man who complains to his mother that he has no companion. The mother allows him to pay his addresses to one of the troupe of girls; the one of whom he makes choice enters a circle, and the rest crown her with flowers which are brought by the lover.

The *Makovitza*, or Dance of Cakes, is a form of Harvest Thanksgiving. Each girl taking part in it carries a cake made of honey and poppy-seeds, and eats it slowly while moving in

## Some European Dances

a circle : this is evidently a surviving feature of an old marriage rite. Russian ideas of marriage are peculiar ; as a Russian proverb has it, “ I love thee like my soul, and beat thee like my fur cape ! ” A woman who is not whipped periodically, among the peasant class, complains of neglect.

Among the Kalmucks the women’s dances are sad and slow, but those of the men are fierce and lively. This seems to typify the marriage relation among these peoples.

A Pyrrhic Dance is executed by mounted cavalry with sword evolutions. A Labyrinth Dance consists of twenty to thirty couples, united together by handkerchiefs. The most lively dances are among the Ukraines or people of Little Russia. In Russian court society, national dances are now entirely superseded by those of foreign origin. The *Polonaise* usually opens a ball, and the *Mazurka* ends it. They have, however, a light and graceful waltz of their own, the *Canaica*. All ranks take part in the stately *Polonaise*. It is more of a procession than a dance. One rule is that the man has to surrender his partner to whomsoever comes to claim her. The new claimant bows to the lady, and then claps his hands together, while the discarded partner retires to look on moodily from a corner.

## The Kollo

In the *Mazurka*, the couples follow the leader, turning from right to left, in a circle or an oval ; sometimes the woman kneels down, while her partner executes a *chassé* round her, and then the manœuvre is reversed.

The Hungarian *Czardas* begins with a slow, solemn walk ; the lady is placed in position, and, after several complicated movements to a melancholy tune, the dance ends in a mad whirl.

The *Polka* or *Pulka* (which means half-step) is a revival of an old quick-step, described by Sir John Davies in his "Orchestra," a poem descriptive of dancing, written in 1596 :—

" Yet there is one, the most delightful kind,  
A lofty jumping, or a leaping round,  
Where, arm in arm, two dancers are entwined,  
And whirl themselves in strict embracement  
bound ;  
And still their feet an anapaest do sound,  
An anapaest is all their music's song,  
Whose first two feet are short, and third is  
long."

The *Tzigane* is a Hungarian dance of gipsy origin.

*DANCE OF DALMATIA, THE KOLLO.*  
—The dance of the Morlacchi is a most interesting sight at the annual fair of Salona. It

## Some European Dances

sometimes begins before dinner, but is kept up with greater spirit afterwards. They call it *Kollo* or *Collo* (signifying circle), it being performed in a circle, like most of their national dances. A man has generally one partner, sometimes two, but always at his right side. In dancing he takes her right hand in his, while she supports herself by holding his girdle with her left ; and when he has two partners the one nearest him holds in her right hand that of her companion, who with her left takes the right hand of the man, and each set dances forward in a line round the circle.

The step is rude, as in most of the Slavonic dances, including the *Polka* and *Radovatschka*, and the music, which is very primitive, is confined to a three-stringed violin. (*Dalmatia and Montenegro. Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson.*)

**GIPSY DANCES.**—The Gipsies first introduced into Europe the Eastern dances which are said to have originated in Persia. Many of these are mere orgies. All take part, young and old, until they fall exhausted after long gyrating in a compact mass. Liszt calls it a “*buffera inferna.*”

The Roumanian Gipsies are slow and graceful dancers.

## Italian Dancing

The *Tanâna* resembles the swaying of flowers in the wind ; the *Keleben* is another gipsy dance ; and the *Cascarrotac* is mingled Basque and Gipsy.

Gipsies first wore bells, like the Morris Dancers, and they were described by Dekker, the dramatist, in the 16th century. The *Hornpipe* was modelled on a Russian Gipsy Dance, called the *Barina*. The Witch Dances of Bohemia were derived from the Gipsies, who had also much to do with the development of the art in Spain and Hungary.

*The Romalis* is the Gipsy Wedding Dance, and is described at great length by George Borrow in his *Gipsies in Spain*. It shows decided traces of an Eastern origin. Open house is kept by the bridegroom for at least three days, and the floor is strewn with comfits and sugary sweet-meats, which are danced by the company into a frothing mass. Castanets are used, and instruments are clashed and banged. It is evidently a Gipsy variation of an old Eastern dance which was popular all over the Roman world at the beginning of the Christian era. Some say it was identical with that which Salome performed before Herod.

## Some European Dances

*THE DANCE IN ITALY.*—Italian dances were perfected in France, and among the upper classes, as in England, few but French dances are used. The ballet, which was invented in Italy and was supreme in the sixteenth century, was later on brought to its greatest perfection in France. Dances of local origin of course still exist in country places, for instance the *Bergamasco*, from Bergamo, introduced by Mendelssohn into his “Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

The *Salterello* is peculiar to Rome. It is in three-quarter time, and is a duet of a skipping character. The woman holds her apron, and trips gracefully opposite to the man. It is in use chiefly among the gardeners and the vintners. The *Ruggera* of Messina is distinguished by making use of two couples, who go round and round like the hands of a clock, singing love-duets. The *Siciliano* figures in the *Nozze di Figaro*, and consists of choosing partners, alternately bowing and pirouetting, and waving a handkerchief. In the *Trescona*, the lady takes the initiative and throws her handkerchief at her partner. The most charming description written of a *Tarantella*—the Neapolitan, not the Sicilian variety—is in Mme de Staél’s *Corinne*. A tambourine plays the same part in Italian dancing as castanets in Spanish dancing.



NEAPOLITAN PEASANTS RETURNING FROM A PILGRIMAGE  
TO THE SHRINE OF THE MADONNA DELL'ARCO

By Leopold Robert



## The Tarantella

"The Neapolitan girls," says an old writer, "dance to the snapping of their fingers, and the beat of a tambourine, and whirl their petticoats about them with greater elegance in the position than other Italians, and more airiness in the flow of their draperies; striking likenesses of them may be found in the paintings of Herculaneum." Their Greek origin is here indicated.

"The young girls of Ischia," says Stolberg, "have many native graces. Some of them danced to the tambourine, in the court of the house where we lived, a dance called the Tarantella, because it comes from Taranto. Two people dance together; never two men, sometimes a man and a woman; generally two girls. The tambourine is always played by a woman. This is enlivened by the singing of the girls that dance. The songs they sing in general are the complaints of lovers, and the cruelties of the maiden beloved. You imagine you behold a priestess of Apollo seated on the tripod, and that the music is the inspiration of the god. No dance is so full of grace and decorum as this. The head inclining, the downcast eyes, the noble dignity of mien and the inimitable elasticity, are indescribable."

## Some European Dances

*The Tarantella* is the great national dance of the Sicilians and Neapolitans. It is really an action or dramatic dance, and signifies the wooing of a fisher-girl by a fisherman. It is the most passionate and picturesque of all dances, and the Sicilian boys dance it with an abandon and a *joie de vivre* that recall what must have been the inspiration of the dance in classic ages.

The derivation is from the city of *Tarantum*, from which the name of the great spider, Tarantula, is also derived, the theory being that, to cure the bite of the Tarantula, the Tarantella must be danced to the point of exhaustion.

The partners salute each other, draw off, and dance timidly and separately; they then return to each other, stretch out their arms and whirl madly together at the highest possible speed. They say in Sicily, "It is unlucky to dance the Tarantella alone."

*THE ROMAICA*.—This ancient Greek Dance is still in fashion in Athens, and is described as follows :—

The girls and the young men, while performing the same steps and the same figures, dance at first separately, after which the two troops join and mix, so as to compose but one company of dancers in a round. Then it is that a

## The Romaica

girl leads the rest, taking a man by the hand, between whom there is displayed a handkerchief, or ribbon, of which the couple each take one end. The others pass and repass successively under the ribbon. At first they go rather slowly in a round, after which the conductress rolls the circle round her, making a number of turnings and windings. The art of the leader is to extricate herself from the maze, and to reappear all of a sudden at the head of the circle, showing in her hand, with a triumphant air, her silken thread, just as when she began the dance. Any number of girls and youths placed alternately can take part, and the movements of the leaders must be followed in a circular outline. The graceful attitudes depicted on ancient vases are often reproduced, for this is the famous Labyrinth Dance of the Greeks, and the leading maiden represents Ariadne. It is also called the Crane Dance because it resembles a flight of cranes in which one is always seen at the head, leading the rest, who follow in a circular form. The dance of Ariadne was said to have been invented by Daedalus, who was also the creator of the Labyrinth. Pausanias says that at Knossos is still preserved that choral dance, mentioned in the Iliad of Homer, which Daedalus composed for Ariadne. The

## Some European Dances

peasants perform this survival annually, at the conclusion of the vintage, the leader waving a handkerchief, and preceding the mules laden with grapes.

*BASQUE DANCES.*—The Basques of both the French and Spanish sides of the Pyrenees have original dances, as might be expected of this interesting race.

The *Pordon-Dantza* is slow and languishing. It is performed on the Feast of St. John. In Guipuzcoa an *Edate* or ceremonial dance is organized in every village by the Alcalde. After church on Sunday the girls are drawn up into a troop of amazons, and enact a drama, daring their lovers to fight, and encouraging them to join them. The men join in and there is a solemn parade. Then at a signal given by the Alcalde, the movements become brisk and whirling. The women play a very important part in this dance, as leaders of the men. In the *Mutchico* or *Saute Basque*, two sticks are placed in the form of a cross. An old man calls “Houp!” claps his hands, and sings. A young man comes forward, and pirouettes in an angle of the cross. The *Zorzico* is another ceremonial dance regulated by the Alcalde, after church on Sunday. The national game “La Pelota,” a kind of

## The Zorzico

tennis, is played first. It is opened by bachelors ; girls follow, and afterwards married people join in with the rest. The leader first dances alone, and then chooses a girl, who is escorted to him by two envoys. He throws his cap at her feet, and dances madly before her. They form a chain, and the rest follow, even children joining in. Now the pace becomes quicker, while they cry “ Arin, Arin ! ” snapping their fingers. The Angelus bell rings and all stop suddenly. It is very decorous and simple.

*"Time the measure of all moving is,  
And dancing is a moving all in measure."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## DANCES OF THE EAST

*THE ALMEHS.*—The Almehs of Egypt are a professional class like the Geishas of Japan, or the Improvisatori of Italy. On suitable occasions they chant unpremeditated poetry. Their education is greatly superior to that of the ordinary native women, and the dance and the song, the funeral and the marriage rites, are their peculiar province.

No festival takes place at which the Almehs are not present, nor any entertainment at which they do not constitute the chief attraction. During banquets they are placed upon a rostrum, and afterwards they descend into the saloon and perform pantomime dances. Suppleness, expressiveness, grace, and dramatic ability are all in requisition, with perfect gestures and attitudes. The instruments used are the flute, the tambour de basque, and cymbals. Upon the fingers little bells are worn, resembling small cymbals, and used in a similar manner to the castanets of Spain and Italy. The dancers sing together in monotone, and recite elegiac, love, and other poetry. They are an integral part of the domestic life of the east, and are called upon to perform in the Harems. They are hired at a very costly rate, but of course they have many inferior

## Dances of the East

and degenerate imitators. These women are in request at all marriage ceremonies, when they perform dances before the bride, playing on instruments; and the aid of Almehs is considered equally necessary at the death of relatives, to accompany the procession, and sing sorrowful airs, breaking forth at intervals into shrieks of anguish and howls of lamentation. The difference between the notes of exultation and of woe appears to be little else than a continual and unvarying repetition of the syllable *Al-alalalalah* for the former, and of *Ul-ulululah* for the latter.

In the East, generally, the same class of dancing-girl everywhere exists. They are protected by law, and live in little communities under the charge of an old woman. There was an instance in the Island of Goa, where, the archbishop having driven them out, they established their community elsewhere, and carried on a considerable speculation on their own account. Their dress is always sumptuous. They are loaded with jewels and chains of gold and silver, and are distinguished by a necklace composed of flowers strung together, called *mogrees*, bearing some resemblance to Spanish double jessamy, but with a more powerful odour.

## Chinese Dances

*CHINESE DANCES.*—Dancing in China is highly ceremonial, and in its most ancient form is connected with ancestor-worship. There is a hymn extant to which the Mandarins danced, when celebrating the Confucian rite, and Confucius himself is said to have commended the practice.

The Hierarchic order of the dance is very ancient. Every member of the Chinese Hierarchy was given a certain number of themes and performers of his own. In the Emperor's Palace were enacted by law eight different kinds of themes, performed by eight different sets of executants, sixty-four in all! At the time of the Winter Solstice, when Heaven is worshipped, and at the Summer Solstice, the period of the adoration of the earth, certain sacrificial dances were obligatory. There is a ceremonial dance to the Emperor as well as to ancestors. Civil and military dances are solemnly performed, entirely by men, and evolutions are executed with a long feather, or a sword, respectively. It is obvious that women cannot dance in China. Ancient China had symbolic dances which represented works of agriculture, war, and other general subjects; and processions of persons costumed as wild beasts, supposed to be in pursuit of the spirits of epidemics. The Emperor devoted the

## Dances of the East

spring and autumn to ceremonial dances, and gave complimentary dances to his officers of state.

For three days after the second month, the black-dressed Miaotse (Tseng-Miao) aborigines assemble to perform a religious dance, similar to the old English dances round the maypole, but far more solemn. The women wear black dresses, consisting of a sailor jacket open at the chest, and an accordion-pleated skirt, beautifully embroidered in coloured silks, white handkerchiefs on the head with broad-headed silver pins, and three silver rings on the neck. The youths dress in corresponding style and colours, with silver ornaments, and each youth carries a six-tubed flute. Circles are formed in groups of six or seven. The youths play a few bars, and then wave their flutes in the air ; the leader nudges his partner, who, with the chain of girls, moves sideways a few steps towards the left ; then all stop. The music recommences, and all gradually move in circles round the pole in the centre. At sunset they disperse, having exchanged rings, ~~and~~ <sup>at</sup> the end of an evening some have twenty rings round their necks.

The Tseng-Miao Dance takes place in the third month. Men stand with flutes in the centre, in groups of five or seven ; then a

## Japanese Dances

circle of girls, with a group of parents and friends on the outside for protection. The men lead, and the girls follow in steps like those of a Scotch Reel in series of threes.

*DANCES OF JAPAN.*—Japanese art began with dancing. It was the spontaneous expression of emotion. Confucius says—"When words and signs and exclamations fail to show forth the depth and strength of our emotions, we break out at last, and all at once, into music, poetry, and dancing." Dancing was the principal means of expression in Japan ; the chanted words and the dress in character were only to explain its meaning. The entire literature of Japan teems with allusions to the legend of the dance which celebrated the yearly return of the sun; and from other dances have been evolved the lyric dramas of the Middle Ages.

The Miko, the "darling of the gods," still at this day performs the sacred mirror dance before many a village shrine. Half-a-thousand dancers may still be seen circling with waving arms in the Dance of Thanksgiving under the Harvest moon ; and on the Festival of the Dead, white-robed girls, issuing from the Temple of the Green Lotus, in Kio, witnessed the butterfly dance, welcoming the summer. The pilgrim bands dance the *ondo*

## Dances of the East

by the roadside every spring, on their way to the Shrine of the Sun-Goddess in Isé. But many of the ancient dances have fallen into disfavour, and many are quite forgotten, like the *Geuroka Odori*, danced about that symbol of royalty, the umbrella, and the dance of the “Creators” on the double summit of Mount Isukuba.

In some of the more out-of-the-way parts of Europe, where the Sun still dances on Easter morning in honour of the Resurrection, children are awakened early to see it glide across the floor of their chamber, skip from wall to wall, and leap from floor to ceiling. The miracle is wrought by means of a piece of looking-glass which causes a ray to be thrown through the window. This custom is much older than Christianity, for our Pagan ancestors were wont to celebrate the return of the Sun with dancing, and, reflected from bits of shell or polished metal, they made the Sun dance with them.

So in the Japanese folk-tale concerning the return of the Sun (who is a goddess in Japan), the dance of the mirror enshrines the myth. It describes how by means of a mystic dance the sky Sun-Goddess was compelled to return to earth, and was fastened by a straw rope, and now whenever she sees it she is compelled to earth again. The tale is thus told :—The



JAPANESE STAGE DANCING GIRLS

By UTAGAWA KUNISADA (1785-1864)



## Japanese Dances

great Sun-Goddess once shut up her light from the world, because she was angry with her brother, his Impetuous-Male-Augustness the Sea-God. Then all the people came together to persuade her to reappear ; and, pretending that they had found another Sun, they rejoiced loudly, and held up a large silver mirror, till the Goddess, moved by curiosity, opened the door ever so little, and saw the glory of her own face reflected quivering on the silver shield. But the wily people, having got her through the door, shut it behind her, and captured her for ever !

(*Sunrise Stories, Roger Riordan and Tozo Takajungii.*)

The Japanese have never forgotten that the light of the sun was brought back to them by means of dancing, and in their country it has been honoured as a religious ceremony from time immemorial, and is practised as a fine art. The Geishas, or professional dancing-girls, are very highly educated, and carefully trained. They are set apart for this purpose, and from earliest girlhood, when they are called *Maikos*, are taught to recite beautifully, and to be learned in all the chief branches of history and poetry. A finished Geisha is one of the products of Japanese civilisation, and they are not

## Dances of the East

unlike the *Hetairae* of Ancient Greece. They do not mix with other women, but they are respected to a certain extent, and are the only really well-educated women in Japan. Their profession is a very arduous one, and no class works harder to attain absolute proficiency.

The War Dances of Japan have also a religious origin. A legend tells of a certain deity who, when conquered in battle and threatened with death by drowning, painted his face red, and lifted his feet and waved them in an agony of supplication! So originated the "Warrior-Dance," *Hayato-Mai*, which is still to be seen at the Imperial Court.

Buddhist priests of great learning and refinement, used the dance in the thirteenth century as an instrument for refining the uncultured military class, together with the "tea-ceremony," landscape-gardening, and other arts.

The Japanese Dance, like that of ancient Greece, is almost entirely pantomimic. It has an esoteric meaning, in which each gesture has a symbolic value, and the uninitiated cannot readily comprehend it. The feet are not made prominent in Japanese dancing, their action being considered subordinate, but the technique is most elaborate, and requires rigorous physical training.

The *Bagaku* is one of the most ancient

## Japanese Dances

religious dances, said to have been introduced from China two thousand years ago. The *Kagura*, the dance of the Shinto shrines, is of pure Japanese origin, and is said to be the same as that used to lure the Sun-Goddess from her cave. It was wont to be performed at night in memory of the dark hours when Amaterasu withdrew her light from the world. Modifications of it are employed, and out of it grew the *Kabuki*, or popular theatres of Japan.

The *No* dances are those which have been developed and refined from the original popular themes of Japan, by the zeal of the Buddhist priests ; these being not unlike Greek measures, in that poetry, music, and dancing are all made of equal importance in them. The *No* dramas accompanying them belong to the classic literature of Japan, and some of them are masterpieces. The *No* theatres are quite distinct from the *Kabuki* theatres. The dances of the "Maple Club" at Tokio, to which foreigners chiefly resort, are popularised forms of the *No*. The *Odori* are the most ancient of all Japanese exercises. They have been called "the wild-flowers in the field of Japanese dancing." The *Uta-gaki* was a gorgeous display of youths and maidens, clad in blue silk robes with scarlet girdles, who

## Dances of the East

danced before the Emperor, and through the streets of the city of Nara. When the Imperial capital was removed from Nara to Kyoto, A.D. 794, the inhabitants of Kyoto performed a new dance which they called the *Honen-odori*, in which each district of the city was represented by a special colour and costume, all of the latter being most exquisitely embroidered.

The *Saibara* were pantomime dances founded on sonnets set to Chinese music. In one of these the dancers strove to imitate the undulating movements of the sea. These popular kinds, indeed, touched upon every imaginable subject—the earth, the sea, the sky, the seasons, the emotions, &c.

In country districts the *Bon-Odori* are danced every August to welcome the spirits of the departed, who are then supposed to return and partake of a little feast prepared for them. This is a very important ceremonial dance connected with ancestor-worship, and every province has its own special form of it. The main feature, however, in which the peasants form a great living wheel—a circle in perpetual motion—is the same everywhere.

The *Tanabata-Odori* is danced by children on the seventh day of the seventh month, to celebrate the union of the two stars, the

## Hindu Dancing

“Herd-boy Prince,” and the “Weaver Princess.” The little ones are so sumptuously clothed that their movements are necessarily restricted.

The *Genon-odori* is the local dance of Wakayama, and is performed by seventy or eighty merchants in fanciful costumes.

The dance in Japan is closely interwoven with the life of the people at every point, and in their dances, including those of the professional Geisha, all phases of national life are faithfully reflected. It is the record of the artistic development of the country, and its influence has always been on the side of refinement and culture. It owes its high place to the value in which it has always been held by the Japanese, as a necessary element of their national life.

*HINDU DANCING.*—The Hindus have a sacred dance round the Karam tree, called the *Karama*. Both men and women join in it, and it takes place at what we should call a Harvest Festival, when a branch of the tree is plucked and brought into the village, and offerings are made to it. It is characteristic of the Dravidian races, not the Hindus proper; they enact this rite in the month of Bhadam.

There is also a religious dance of ecstasy

## Dances of the East

which represents that of Vishnu with the Gopis. But such dances are of a frantic nature, and are used at weddings to scare away evil spirits. The Harvest Festival dance is more of the nature of a game among children, moving in a circle as they sing, "Here we go round the mulberry bush," a solar dance, in fact, of solar-worship origin. The other dance seems to be more a species of possession, when the dancers assume an inspired or Bacchic character. It is really a form of exorcism by dancing.

The *Bayaderes*, or *Nautchees*, the dancing-girls of Benares, are carefully chosen for their beauty, when very young, to become the priestesses of the god Rondzu. Their profession is to dance before the images of the god of 108 faces. A Hindu may devote any one of his daughters to the god, but it is usual to devote the fifth daughter in a family. The *Devadassis*, as they are called, are then decorated with a jewel of gold inset with the 108 faces of their god, to whom they are mystically given in marriage. The string which holds it is stained with saffron as a tribute to the goddess *Lakmé*, or Joy, for their dance signifies a prayer of Love.

Asiatics hire them largely for feasts, to honour special guests. The dance has certain

## Hindu Dancing

affinities with the Fandango, and the style is classic, and consists of poses and attitudes similar to those of antique dancing. The costume, though very rich and covered with jewels, is extremely modest, and there is no voluptuous excitement about the dance, though it has been much exaggerated in erroneous accounts. Postures, attitudes, and chants constitute the official Nautch Dance.

*“ Let foreigners brag and crow  
That dancin’s their devotion,  
'Tis little the craychurs know  
Of the poetry of motion;  
Their polkas or quadrilles  
Are nothin’ else but prancin'  
An’ Irish jigs and reels  
The king and queen of dancin’.”*

## DANCES OF THE NORTH

THOSE of the Faroe Isles are the most important. In the Sagas we read much about the *Reihen* and weapon-dances. They were in honour of Thor, and the Vikings were wont to dance round the drinking-horn, at marriage-feasts. Faroe music is originals and is supposed to be derived from the ancient Norse chants. Swedish dances are mostly dramas of love. Many are very lively, and 400 varieties are known to exist. The national dance is the *Polska*. The old "Weaving Dance" of Sweden represents the crossing of warp and woof, while little children, running between the couples, represent the shuttle. Iceland has a national dance called *Vikivaka*, and another called *Hringbrot*. In this latter ten or more form a chain, the first going under the arched arms of the last. The Lapps still perform the ancient Sword-dance. The Scotch dances partake of the Scandinavian quality. The Scots are naturally given to dancing, but it was much repressed at the Reformation, and dancing at funerals was put down after many edicts. In the Highlands the ancient Reels and Strathspeys were never quite abolished, and the Reel and the Fling are still the two principal forms of Highland dancing.

## Dances of the North

The Reel is of Celtic origin (*righal*), and a gliding, graceful movement is practised in the foursome, sixsome, and eightsome Reels, danced respectively by two, three, and four couples. The Strathspey is slower in time, but requires even more quickness and agility in execution. The reel of Tulloch can be danced by a man simultaneously smoking, talking, and playing the bagpipes. In the Highland Fling a kick is always essential. These are the only true national dances of Scotland. All others are importations, except the Sword Dance, described elsewhere. The tunes to them correspond to the rhythm of the stanzas of Ossian. The time is—

Two steps to one bar,  
One step to one bar,  
One step to two bars

respectively called minor, single, and double.

Self-restraint is invariable in Scottish dancing; there are no unexpected spontaneous gestures. Cries, and cracks of the fingers are the only outlet allowed, and the conventional rules and steps are always followed. After the set dances of an English ball-room there is something refreshing in the charmingly dignified dances of the young Highland lairds at the Northern Meeting at Inverness. The national costume

## Ancient Irish Dances

lends an added grace, and the Scotch aristocracy are quite at their best when seen in their ancestral dances.

It is noteworthy that the Welsh, although they dance often, have no strictly national dances.

*ANCIENT IRISH DANCES.*—In Ireland circular dances, called “Serpent Dances,” are still practised round a tree on May-day. The dancers move in curves from right to left, as if imitating the undulations of a serpent. They seem quite unconscious of any symbolical meaning as they circle round a tree or a bonfire, yet the name of the dance is *Rinke teampuill*, corresponding exactly to *Chorea templi*. In ancient times, if the omens were wrong in any way the priest blew a horn, as a curse, and it was danced from left to right.

In the “Field Dance,” handkerchiefs are used to connect the dancers. Three abreast hold the ends, and the others follow in couples. All the couples pass under the handkerchiefs of the first three, wheeling round in semi-circles; they form a variety of figures, performed with occasional *entrechats*, otherwise cross-capers; finally they unite and go back to their places. *Espringall* was the hopping-dance, a kind of

## Dances of the North

carol. One person sang the carol, while the rest danced to it (*Fer Ceagail*).

Jigs are not specially Irish, but are cosmopolitan. Only within the last century or so have they been described as "Irish Jigs." The following are well known Jig Tunes: The Washerwoman, The Hunt, Gather up the Money, Blackberry-blossom, &c.

The Jig (*Gigue, Giga, Geige*) can be traced back as far as 1300. In style it is similar to the *Cinque Pace*, and the *Galliarde*. It may be well described in the words of Beatrice, in "Much ado about Nothing" (Act II. Sc. 1): "Wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly—modest, as a measure, full of state and antiquity; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace, faster and faster till he sink into his grave."

The Irish jig is danced with arms akimbo and legs crossed, to a quick, lively measure. There are generally two partners, the man holding the shillelagh, shouting and slapping his legs, or snapping his fingers, the woman with both arms akimbo. Sailors' hornpipes are dances of the same character, for the

## The Irish Jig

performer can sing, play an instrument, and foot it, at one and the same time. *Gigue*, or *Giga*, originally meant a stringed instrument. It has been said that the Irish jig can express all shades of emotion, from maddest gaiety to deepest sadness.

*Oh, Tullochgorum's my delight,  
It gars us a' in ane unite,  
And ony sumpn that keeps up spite,  
In conscience I abhor him;  
For blythe and cheery we's be a',  
Blythe and cheery, blythe and cheery,  
Blythe and cheery we's be a'  
And mak' a happy quorum.  
For blythe and cheery we's be a',  
As long as we ha'e breath to draw,  
And dance till we be like to fa',  
The reel of Tullochgorum.*

J. SKINNER.

## MILITARY DANCES

DANCING was from the earliest ages associated with war. We have already remarked that among savage tribes it is an actual incitement to courage. It also is a symbol of victory.

The Greeks encouraged military dances, which were taught as a part of a boy's education. The Spartans invented the Gymnopædic Dance, to stimulate courage among their children. It was executed in public by men and children divested of clothing. The children's choir regulated their motions by those of the men, and all danced at the same time, singing the poems of Thales, Alcmeon, and Dionysodotus.

The Enoplian or Pyrrhic dance (so named after Pyrrhus of Epirus, among the Romans) was performed by young men armed cap-à-pied, who executed all the proper movements for attack or defence. It consisted of four parts. The first was the *Podism* or footing, a quick shifting of the feet, necessary for overtaking or getting away from an enemy. The second was the *Xiphism*, a mock fight in which the dancers imitated all the movements of combatants, aiming a stroke, darting a javelin, dexterously dodging or parrying an attack. The third part was called the *Komos*, and

## Military Dances

consisted of very high leaps, as practice for jumping walls or ditches. The *Tetracomos* was a square figure, executed by slow and majestic movements. The Spartans inaugurated the dance by a set chorus, called *trichoria*, as follows :—

The old men opened by singing : “ In time past we were valiant ”—

The young men took it up : “ We are so at present ”—

The children joined in the refrain : “ We shall be so when our time comes.”

Real arms were always used in these dances. Later on, flasks and ivy-bound reeds were used, and lighted torches in lieu of javelins or swords.

There is a modern Greek dance of a pyrrhic nature. Two men armed with poniards advance, with measured step, flourishing their weapons, and pointing them first against their own breasts, then against each others’; after which the dance is continued with violent leaps, requiring great strength and agility.

The Albanians preserve much of the character of the ancient Greek War Dances. They use the curious contortions and twirlings described in the dances of the Lacedaemonians, with sudden inflections of the body into every posture, as if to ward off a blow. They are called Arnauts. A solo dance executed

## The Robbers' Danee

by one of these Arnauts is thus described :—  
“ He began in a slow time, gradually increasing the celerity of his motions. He held a hand-kerchief in his hand, dropped frequently on his knee, and showed his force and dexterity in a variety of attitudes.

Another dance common among the Athenians was called “ the Robbers' Dance.” It was described as being performed in a gloomy hall, before a Pasha surrounded by his guards, who were ready at a moment's notice to strike off the head of any performer who did not please his Highness. The Coryphaei formed a circle, each with an arm round one neighbour's neck and a hand stuck into the other neighbour's girdle. They began at a slow pace which got quicker and quicker, accompanied by horrible cries, and occasionally a pyrrhic figure was introduced, as before described. After a time, the circle broke up, and the performers dispersed in pursuit of the imaginary robbers, whom they captured and brought forward in triumph.

The Celtic nations took with great zest to the Pyrrhic Dance. It has been observed how curiously the Highland War-dances resemble those of the Greeks. “ A number of young men in complete armour rushed in suddenly before the guests, at a certain period of the music

## Military Dances

danced with great agility, and kept time by striking their swords against their shields. Then they disappeared suddenly, and a band of girls entered, tripping hand in hand to a merry tune. They vanished, the young men returned as if engaged in action, and, to the sound of an accompanying instrument, exhibited all the incidents of a real battle."

*Gilly Callum* is evidently a remnant of this. Another analogy to Scottish dancing is to be found among the Circassians. "Several natives placed themselves in a row, and beat time by clapping their hands and chanting *A-ri-ra-ri-ra*. The dancer stood opposite and danced on one spot, holding up his garments and bending so as to watch the movements of his feet. With these he made every possible inflection, much resembling the national dance of the Scotch, while he skipped about in a triangle with his toes almost perpendicular, and shouted in a plaintive voice."

A dance called "Wine of the Gauls and Dance of the Sword" is still to be seen in Brittany. It is a successor of the Celtic Sword Dance, in honour of the sun, with a chorus invoking fire and snow, oak, earth, and water. The young men move in a circle throwing their swords into the air, catching them in rhythm, and forming with the sword-points a circular

## “ Dance of the Sacred Bark ”

figure called “ *La Rose.*” This is identical with the dance described by Olaus Magnus, and Tacitus. A sword dance can be seen in the North Riding of Yorkshire, occurring between St. Stephen’s Day and the New Year. Six youths are dressed in white, decorated with ribbons, and each carries a sword. They are accompanied by a fiddler, a figure representing a doctor, and another nicknamed “ Bessy.” One dancer acts the part of a king, and while he and his courtiers are making a hexagon with their swords, “ Bessy ” gets in the way, and is killed in mock show.

A very ghastly War Dance takes place among the Red Indian tribes, called the “ Dance of the Sacred Bark.” Scalping has all but died out, but the ancient relics are still preserved in the villages, and taken out and danced over periodically. Although strangers are not allowed to witness this rite, facts about it have been elicited. The dancers form up in two lines, men and women alternately, men clad in war paint with bows and arrows, and women in their gayest dresses with silver ornaments. They move in perfect rhythm to a monotonous chant, and presently the “ Bending Woman,” official custodian of the scalps, carries the relics up and down the lines, on her back. The rite lasts four days, concluding with a Round Dance

## Military Dances

performed around a huge bonfire from evening until sunrise.

Tacitus describes the Sword Dance as the national dance of the ancient Germans. It was common to the Saxons, Danes, and Norwegians, and existed in Spain at the time of Cervantes. Now it survives principally in Scotland.

The following is a description of a Sword Dance performed by "seven Caithness men of extraordinary stature" :—

"The first distinct figure was a circle, formed by each man holding his drawn sword in his right hand, and the point of his neighbour's sword in his left. The swords were then held in a vaulted position, and the dancers passed under, and leaped over them, forming innumerable figures, many of which seemed to be as dangerous as they were beautiful. Finally they stood back to back with hands and swords crossed behind them, then, suddenly reversing the position, they interlaced their swords like wicker-work, so as to form a perfect shield, which each bore in turn till at once every dancer grasped his own sword and the magic shield disappeared. The whole was accompanied by the wild music of the bag-pipes, by shrill cries and snappings of the fingers, and by an enthusiasm altogether indescribable."

## The Sword Dance

Brand mentions the Sword Dance which took place in his time (1810) in connection with the dragging of the “fool plough” on Plough Monday. He observes: “This pageant or dance, as used at present, seems a composition made up of the gleanings of several obsolete customs followed anciently.” He also quotes a description of the “Sword Dance” from Olaus Magnus, of the Norse custom: “First with their swords sheathed and erect in their hands they dance in triple round. Then with their drawn swords held erect as before; afterwards extending them from hand to hand they lay hold of each other’s hilt and point, while they are wheeling more suddenly round, and changing their order, throw themselves into the figure of a hexagon, which they call a rose; presently raising and drawing back their swords, they undo that figure, to form with them a four-square rose, that may rebound over the head of each. At last they dance rapidly backward, and, vehemently rattling the sides of their swords together, conclude the sport.”

*“ Who doth not see the measures of the Moon,  
Which thirteen times she danceth ev’ry year ?  
And ends her pavin thirteen times as soon  
As doth her brother, of whose golden hair  
She borroweth part, and proudly doth it wear :  
Then doth she coyly turn her face aside,  
That half her cheek is scarce sometimes descry’d.”*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## THE REVIVAL OF DANCING IN EUROPE

IT is said that dancing as a fine art was revived at a magnificent fête, or ballet, given at Tortona by an Italian nobleman to celebrate the marriage between Isabella of Aragon, and Galeazzo, Duke of Milan.

Catherine de Medicis is responsible for its revival in France. Movements such as the *Branle* and *Pavane*, the *Tourdion*, *Gaillarde*, and *Volta*, were introduced by her. (*q.v.*)

The ballet, as a graceful and dignified pastime, was then approaching its zenith. The exquisite music of Lully, Corelli, and other charming writers of Minuets, Gavottes, Pavanes, &c., gives some of the poetry and feeling and dainty charm of the dances of this great period, the reigns of Louis XIII., XIV., and XV.

France is the great modern school and nursery of dancing. It has had this function ever since the revival of dancing in Europe in the fifteenth century. All our modern terms and expressions, with our modern technique of dancing, come from France, and, until lately, all the most celebrated dancing-masters and greatest exponents of the art were

## The Revival of Dancing

French. France sets the fashions in dances, adopts them from other countries, adapts them to current taste, and launches them into the world, which then eagerly takes them up.

Much of the finest dance-music was written in France, in the great age of dancing, from the time of Lully and Rameau to that of Chopin. The Germans have produced the greatest music to one species of dance—the Waltz—but the French made it the graceful, gliding movement that it is now, under the name of *Valse*. Foreign dances have been given French names such as *Polonaise*, *Rhapsodie Hongroise*, &c., and, whether native or borrowed, we note as of French nomenclature *gavotte*, *bourrée*, *quadrille*, *ballet*, *menuet*, *gaillarde*, *courante*, *turdion*, *branle*, *cotillon*, *pavane*, &c. Even the English Country Dance was supposed to be a corruption of the French *Contre-Danse*, though this etymology is doubtful. However, a ball programme is as naturally printed in French as is a menu. In the matter of dance-music the Germans have lately developed a school, but this is only within the last twenty or thirty years. The dances of other countries have been accepted in society after receiving the *cachet* of Paris, such as the Polka, the Galop, the Pas de Quatre, &c.

Books which have become great authorities

THE PLEASURES OF THE BALL.

BY A. WATTEAU





## French Dancing

on dancing were written in French, by Jehan de Tabouret (or Thoinot Arbeau), le Père Ménestrier, Rameau, Noverre, and Gaston Vuillier. Jehan de Tabouret was a monk in disguise, when he wrote a work entitled "*Orchésographie*." He was the son of a bailiff of Dijon, and wrote in the old French of the sixteenth century, having taken monastic orders to fulfil a vow made by his mother when he was stricken with illness as a boy. On his recovery, in spite of his calling, he devoted his attention to the history of dancing, and wrote the *Dialogue de la Danse* under the name of Thoinot Arbeau.

The *Intermezzo*, or *Entremets*, was originally written to fill up the intervals of waiting for the courses at great banquets, and can be traced back to a banquet given by St. Louis, King of France, to his brother Robert at Compiègne, at which the intervals were filled by dancing. The national dance of France, that to a great extent became the foundation of all the rest, was the *Basse Danse*, so called in contrast to the *Dances-hautes*, or *baladines*, which were danced only by country-people.

The *Dances-basses* were employed at the Courts of Charles IX., and the *Branle*, the *Pavane*, the *Courante*, the *Volta*, and the *Menuet*, were all evolved from these dances.

## The Revival of Dancing

The *Branle* passed to England, where it was called “the Brawl.” The music of the *Pavane* was so stately that it was frequently played at weddings, “*quant on meyne épouser en face de Saincte Egloise une fille de bonne Maison.*” The gentlemen carried swords which made their cloaks project like the tail of a peacock, and the ladies swayed their long stiff trains to and fro.

This noble and beautiful dance (derived from the Latin, *pavo*, a peacock), was in favour from the year 1530 to the minority of King Louis XIV., who preferred the *Ballet* and the *Courante*.

Some say the *Pavane* came from Spain, and some from Padua. It seems to have gradually assimilated itself to the character of the *Basse Danse*, and was essentially a dance of Courts. The following description in verse has been written of it :—

“ Splendeur dorée, et rose, et bleue  
D'un innombrable Diamant,  
Le Paon miraculeusement  
Developpe son ample queue,  
En la largeur de ses deplis  
Tout un étal d'Orfevre tremble,  
Et la Pavane lui ressemble  
Mais avec les pieds plus jolis ! ”

The *Gaillarde* succeeded the *Pavane* in

## The *Courante*

favour, being much more lively and skipping. It also was introduced into England, and it was said that young Sir Christopher Hatton, by its means, danced his way into the favour of Queen Elizabeth. It may be remembered that Scott refers to this dance in “Young Lochinvar” :—

“ So stately his form, and so lovely her face,  
That never the Hall such a Galliard did  
grace.” —

alluding to the “measure” which young Lochinvar and his bride tread together, before they fly on horseback.

The dances of the period always commenced by kissing the partner, to which allusion is made in *Henry VIII.*, when the King says to Anne Boleyn :—

“ Sweetheart,  
It were unmannerly to take you out,  
And not to kiss you.”

*K. Henry VIII., Act I., Sc. 4.*

The *Courante* was lively like the *Gaillarde* and the *Gavotte*. Originally it was in the form of a ballet, and simulated a love-drama. The ladies are disdainful and coy, and each stands separate from her partner, three in a row. The three gallants then join their forces, and

## The Revival of Dancing

approach the ladies in a solid line ; the partners give way, and all whirl together in the *Courante*.

The *Courante*, according to another account, is danced by three couples of supposed lovers. Each lover in turn deserts his own partner, and goes to the others' partners, ultimately each returning to his own. It is dignified and slow, like the Minuet, which has a very similar step.

The *Gavotte* is a French dance called after *Gavot*, a native of the Pays de Gap, in the Hautes Alpes, where the dance originated. It is a variety of the *Branle*. Partners each chose and kissed their damsels, which ceremony was afterwards commuted for little presents.

There is a description in verse of this dance—

“ Michaud prend Marion, la tire à la danse,  
Et après avoir fait sa noble révérence,  
Il la baise à la bouche, et cliquetant les  
doigts,  
Monstre à bien danser il ne craint villageois.  
Or, il a les deux mains au côté, puis se tourne,  
Et devant Marion présente sa personne,  
Puis resautant en l'air gambada lourdement,  
Haut troussant le talon d'un sot contournement.  
La fille s'enhardit, et son homme regarde,  
Et à tout ce qu'il fait de près elle prend garde,

## The Volta

S'il danse de côté, elle fait tout ainsi,  
S'il fait un saut à l'air, Marion saute aussi.  
Tant qu'à les voit danser, à tout le monde  
semble  
Qu'ils ont recordé leurs tricotés ensemble,"  
Et c.

The Gavotte consisted of three steps and an *assemblé*. One springs upon the foot that is on the ground, at the same time pointing the other foot downwards. Gluck's and Grétry's Gavottes are the most beautiful extant.

The *Basse Danse* is a triple measure accompanied by hautboy and tabour. There are four parts to this dance :—

1. The Reverence.	2. The Branle.
3. The Passes.	4. The Tordion.

In 1589 the *Volta*, or *Volte*, succeeded the *Basse Danse*, which was very lively at first, and part of it, the *Branle*, was the oldest form of figure dancing. It is performed to four bars of a song. In the first bar the dancer turns to the left, keeping the feet together and moving the body gently. During the second bar he faces the spectators on the right ; during the third bar he faces those on the left ; and on the fourth bar right again, stealing a discreet look at his partner. At one time every province

## The Revival of Dancing

had its own *Branle*. In the Gavotte *Branle*, the damsel is not to be lifted, but she is to be kissed. In some *Branles* there is an admixture of the *Volte*, which in its early days, as its name implies, consisted of lifting the partner off the ground.

The *Chaconne* (originally the *Ciacone*) is slow, in triple time. It was an Italian dance transported to France, and perfected there. Handel and Bach have written for this measure, and Purcell has left beautiful examples of it. It is mentioned in *Don Quixote*, and is a stately dance, consisting of gliding and bending the body over the right foot, and then springing back, and resting on the left. Two rows of dancers stand *vis-à-vis*.

The *Allemande* is peculiarly graceful. The partners lift their arms, and cross them overhead. While turning and twisting, they never relax this attitude, which is the chief characteristic of the dance. The *Rigaudon* was of Provençal origin. Gardel, the author of the *Menuet de la Cour*, encouraged it, and it follows a somewhat complicated figure. It was danced in 1709, to the tune, "Ah Chloe, when I prove my passion." *Rigaudons* were written by Purcell. It disappeared at the French Revolution. The *Saraband* was a Spanish dance which became fashionable in

## The Minuet

France at the time of Louis XIII., and was practised at the court of Charles II. of England. The word is derived from the Arabic word for *noise*. It is slow and stately, and was taken part in both by men and women.

The *Volta* was imported from Italy. It is described as a dance in which the man turns his partner round several times, and then assists her to make the *Capriole*, or a high spring into the air, a form even now to be seen in Tyrol and Brittany. It was the origin of the waltz, which is a German modification of it.

The climax of dignified and graceful dancing is attained in the *Menuet*, or Minuet. This became so important that the movements originally written for it are incorporated into the structure of the symphony. The Menuet was a development of the *Courante*, a *branle* of Poitou. It is in three-quarter time and consists of four steps. It is called the “Queen of Dances.” There were four principal forms :

1. Menuet de Dauphin.
2. Menuet de la Reine.
3. Menuet de l'Exaudet.
4. Menuet de la Cour.

“*Que de choses dans un Menuet!*” became the proverbial expression, denoting anything which required unusual tact, dexterity, and

## The Revival of Dancing

grace. The primary figure was an S, and afterwards it became a Z. The *Menuet* was supposed to produce the perfect art of being a successful courtier or lover, with its bowing, gazing, posing, and kissing of hands.

The Minuet is slow and stately, the dance *par excellence* of Court circles. It is essentially a French dance, derived from the word *Menuet*, a diminutive of *Menu* (small), from the small steps taken by the performers, and it was a favourite and most graceful subject for Dresden china figures and groups. It is constantly revived on the stage, but unless the costume is the appropriate one of the early eighteenth century, is not effective.

Famous minuets have been written by Boccherini, J. Baptiste, Lully, Mozart, and many other well-known composers.

The beautiful male figure of Watteau's picture, entitled "*l'Indifférent*" is dancing the steps of a Minuet. It was introduced into Paris in 1650, and was first set to music by Lully.

Rameau and Marcel have given elaborate instructions how to dance the Minuet, and the following is a correct description of the *Menuet de la Cour*.

*First.* In the *Menuet de la Cour* there were only two salutations, one at the beginning and

## French Dances

one at the end of the dance. Each salutation consisted of two bows, and occupied eight measures of the music.

*Second.* The track of each dancer in performing the *figure principale* took the form of the letter Z.

*Third.* All Minuet steps (*Pas de Menuet*), whether taken forward, to the right, to the left, or in turning, invariably began with the right foot, both for the lady and the gentleman.

*Fourth.* All real *Pas de Menuet* occupied two measures of the music and in executing them the balance of the body was transferred from one limb to the other only four times.

The *Kermesse* is a country dance of Northern France ; it signifies Church Mass.

The *Farandole* originated in the South of France ; all hold handkerchiefs, and follow their leader.

The *Bourrée* is characteristic of Central France.

All French popular songs are founded on dances, such as the *Vau-de-Vire*, afterwards called *Vaudville*, of Normandy. The oldest French dance tune known is “Robinet et Mariette” ; and there is a French proverb :—

“ Apres la panse (repast)  
Vient la danse.”

## The Revival of Dancing

The dances of Brittany remain to be described. They are the only ones which are of Celtic origin and can be traced back to the old nature-worship. They were held around the dolmens, on every Saturday in June at four o'clock, when the youths wore green ears of wheat, and the girls flowers of the flax in their hats. The following dances are described by an eye-witness :—

In the north of Brittany, square dances and mazurkas are general, one of the figures in a quadrille being particularly quaint. The musician who sits in the centre, playing his concertina, calls out each figure. When he called out “Balancez les Dames,” the couples turned and faced to corners. Then, each man getting behind his girl, seized her by the waist and threw her up into the air, to kiss or to touch the face of the girl who is held up by the partner opposite, the two girls thus kissing in the air. At St. Herbot, near Morlaix, the people danced without musical accompaniment, two men singing to the measure. They came forward and sang two verses alternately, the first line of one verse over-lapping the last line of the other, and jigged up and down, until, all the other men joining them, they formed into a circle, and danced round and round. Then one by one, the girls joined in the circle, each slipping her hands into the



A VILLAGE DANCE IN BRITTANY

BY A. LEFEUVRE

Musée du Luxembourg



## French Dances

hands of one of the men, who did not even look up to see whose hands they were holding.

In the south of Brittany, the folk always dance to the sound of the *Binyou*, or Bagpipes, various forms of the *Pas de Quatre* being popular. Every wedding concludes with a dance, and every Pardon and Church Festival is accompanied by dancing.

Other old French dances are called :—

The *Tricotet*, beloved by Henry IV, to the refrain—

“ J’aimons les filles  
J’aimons le bon vin,” &c. ;

the *Passe-pied*, a lively minuet, and *L’Allemagne*, a country dance, like our Sir Roger de Coverley.

The *Carmagnola* was a dance of the French Revolution, 1793. A tree, on the top of which was suspended a cap of Liberty, stood in the centre of the group, and the dancers danced round it.

The *Contredanse*, or *Country Dance*, in England, dates from the time of William the Conqueror, who brought it from Normandy.

The *Polka* was a folk-dance of Bohemia; its popularity is accounted for, by the fact of a tourist happening to see a peasant-girl dancing it, and he took notes of her performance, and

## The Revival of Dancing

brought it to Paris and London, where it became the rage in the middle of last century. It is in 2-4 time, the third quaver accentuated.

The *Polka Mazurka* is a Polish variety of the same dance. It is written in 3-8 or 3-4 time. It was originally a round dance. Chopin's Mazurkas are famous.

The *Waltz*, from *walzen*, to roll, is identical in origin with the Italian *Volta*, or *Volte*, as it was called in France, when introduced by Catherine de Medicis, to succeed in favour the *Basse Danse*, the native dance of France. It was originally of a lively nature, but has of late years become slower, more graceful, and more gliding in character. In some countries it is still quick and tripping.

Many great writers, such as Chopin and Strauss, are responsible for the altered and more serious character of the waltz.

The *Quadrille*, so called from a card-game played by four persons with forty cards, consists of five figures or movements executed by four couples, each forming the side of a square.

The *Cotillon*, or *Cotillion*, is really a peasant dance in origin, and was so called from the short skirts worn by the ladies, in contradistinction to the stately dress required by the Minuet.

## The Cotillon

A girl inquires of a friend :—

“ Ma commère, quand je danse  
Mon Cotillon, va t'il bien ? ”

It was re-introduced into England in 1863, and the institution of cotillon favours, and presents, was then begun. Many of the figures were used in the *Basse Danse*, or *Branle*, which in each province in France had customs of its own. For instance, a cavalier handed a torch or candle to a lady, and if she took it, she accepted him, and if she blew it out, he was rejected. He was then called “The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance.”

The Cotillon in America is called “the German.” It is most elaborate. Figures are invented, with favours and costly presents after each figure, often as many as twenty in an evening ; and at the end of each figure, the partners waltz, both with each other, and with other partners. Some of the principal figures in the Cotillon are :—*La conversation*, *Le mouchoir*, *La trompeuse*, *Les dames cachées*, *Le 8 entre deux chaises*, *Les quatre coins*, *Le fandango*, *L'artichaux*, *Pile ou face*, *La parapluie*, *La Loterie*, *La Pêche à la ligne*, *Les Ballons*, *Steeplechase*, *Le chassé à course*, *Le postillon*, &c.

## The Revival of Dancing

More well-known figures are those in which a fan, a bouquet, a mirror, or coloured ribbons, play various parts. The names of the figures given above indicate the subjects which suggested them.



*" See how those flowers that have sweet beauty too,  
(The only jewels that the earth doth wear  
When the young Sun in bravery her doth woo)  
As oft as they the whistling wind do hear,  
Do wave their tender bodies here and there,  
And though their dance no perfect measure is,  
Yet oftentimes their music makes them kiss."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCES

ENGLAND is the home of the country dance. The origin of the term has been explained by the French *Contre Danse*, meaning that the couples stand in rows facing one another, but this explanation is not now accepted. The old English dances are fairly proved to be of native origin. A great deal of folk-music of a purely English character survives, which proves that the old-fashioned country dances, though now almost entirely superseded by foreign importations, were at one time universal, and very popular.

The Saxon Glee-men were professional dancers and tumblers. One of the most ancient English dances was the "Egg-dance," in which the executant was blindfolded, and had to perform a hornpipe amongst a number of eggs placed in a certain pattern, without breaking them. After the Crusades, the dances of the Jongleurs came in, and they brought with them a number of others supposed to be of Eastern origin. The Morris Dance of modern revival is said to be descended from one of these. Remnants of them are found in many children's games, such as "Hunt the Slipper," "Kiss in the Ring," and "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush." All the Tudor Dances

## English Country Dances

introduced the ceremony of kissing, one of the most famous being called “the Cushion,” or “Joan Saunderson,” a very old tune for which was “Gaillarde Sweet Margaret,” or “Gaillarde Anglaise,” printed in 1615. The “Cushion Dance” is thus described :—

“A ring of male and female dancers placed alternately was formed, and one of the men, taking a cushion in his hand, danced round the inside thereof till the end of the tune. Then he suddenly stopped, and began to sing “This dance it will no further go,” whereupon the musicians demanded, “I pray you, good sir, why say you so ?” and to this he replied, “Because Joan Saunderson will not come to, and she must come to, whether she will or no.” He then laid the cushion at the feet of one of the ladies, and on this she had to kneel down to receive the salutation. At first she was bound to show some reluctance, but after the kiss she got up, according to the rules, and danced round with the man, singing “Prinkum prankum is a fine dance, and shall we go dance it over again ?” When it was the lady’s turn to carry the cushion, she placed it at the feet of one of the men, and as she received the kiss, sang, “Welcome, John Saunderson, welcome, welcome.”

The names of other old English dances of a

## “Merrie England”

similar character were :—“Dull Sir John,” “All in a Garden Green,” “If all the world were paper,” “Pudding Pies,” “Sweet Kate,” and “Once I loved a Maiden Fair.” Above all there was “My Lady Greensleeves,” which, with its refrain :—

“Greensleeves was all my joy,  
Greensleeves was my delight,  
Greensleeves was my heart of gold,  
And who but Lady Greensleeves ?”

still survives in the tune of that name. Ours was the country of dancing in those days of “Merrie England !” At one time the Judges danced annually on Candlemas day in the Hall of Lincoln’s Inn, and there were four Revels held annually in the various Inns of Court, now so solemn and sad, save for the occasional revival of an old-time “Masque” at Gray’s Inn. The Revels were held at “All Hallows,” “Erkenwald,” “Purification,” and “Midsummer.” The French *Branle* was introduced, and called in English the *Brawle*, a very popular one being, “John, come kiss me now.” An English form of the Minuet was called the “Canary”; it was not so dignified and stately as the French form.

Queen Elizabeth greatly encouraged dancing, and was a performer herself. She delighted in

## English Country Dances

the high jumps and hops cultivated by the English, and extracted a compliment on this score, for when comparing herself with Mary Queen of Scots to the Scottish Ambassador, he adroitly remarked "that the Queen of England could hop much higher than her Majesty of Scotland!"

One of the most ancient dances, which still survives in its original form and is danced every year on May 8th, is the "Furry," or "Flora" of Helston, in Cornwall. It is known to have flourished in the time of William the Conqueror, and, like the Breton dances, is a survival of the old Celtic nature-worship. Early in the morning the young men and maidens go out into the country (*fadē*) to gather branches of May; they return garlanded with these, and singing :

"For we were up as soon as day—O !  
For to fetch the summer in—the summer  
and the May—O !  
For summer is a-come—O !  
And winter is a-go—O !"

Then they form themselves into bands, and dance in procession, in and out of every house in the town, going in at one door and coming out at another, still singing— :

"Robin Hood and Little John,  
They both are gone to the Fair O !

## Maypole Dances

And we will go to the merry green wood  
To see what they do there O !

And for to chase O !  
To chase the Buck and Doe,  
With Hal-an-Tow  
Jolly rumble, O ! ”

### *Chorus—*

“ And we were up as soon as day, O ! ”

A country fair is held at the same time. All classes join in this dance. The servants do their round at 6.30 a.m., the gentlefolks at noon, and the tradesmen in the evening. The whole town is decorated with flowers, and the couples dance through the market-place, through every street, and in and out of every house, as described above, singing the “ Furry ” song.

The old English Maypole Dances, now things of the past, were doubtless on somewhat of this pattern. The institutions of King and Queen of the May were survivals of pre-Christian Festivals, when, at our Whitsuntide, these symbols of the forces of nature were chosen and glorified in a procession with song and dance.

The following are the directions for one of the old English dances, “ All in a Garden Green ” :—

## English Country Dances

“ Long ways for six.

“ Lead up all a D. forwards and back, set and turne S. That again. First man shake his owne wo. by the hand, then the 2 then the 3 by one hand, then by the other ; kisse her twice, and turne her. Shake her by the hand, then by the other ; kisse her twice and turne her. Sides all, set and turne S. That again. This as before, the woman doing it. Armes all, set and turne S. That again. This as before, the man doing it.”

During the Puritan régime dancing all but disappeared, but came into favour at the Restoration. French dances were usually practised at the court of Charles II. When Bath became the home of fashion, Beau Nash, who was master of the ceremonies at the pump-room, completely banished English dances. French dances were the only ones known in polite society. Their vogue has steadily increased, and dances either borrowed from France, or French adaptations of those of foreign origin, are the only ones now seen in London ball-rooms. At Christmas an annual “ Sir Roger de Coverley ” is permitted, and country dances such as the “ Swedish ” the “ Tempête,” and the “ Barn Dance,” as well as an occasional “ Highland Reel,” may be

## The Waltz

seen in the country-house, or were, at least, in Dickens' time.

The *Waltz*, now the reigning favourite of all English ball-rooms, is a German modification of the Italian *Volta* (or jump), the French *Volte*, and afterwards *Valse*. The first German Waltz-tune was "*Ach! du lieber Augustin*" written in 1770. It was first danced at the Paris Opera in 1793, in Gardel's ballet, "*La Dansomanie*." In 1812 it was introduced into English ballrooms and roused a perfect storm of ridicule and protest. It did not become popular until re-introduced at Almack's by the Emperor Alexander in 1816. The exquisite music written for the Waltz by the great Strauss, composer of the "*Blue Danube*," and other famous waltzes, has had much to do with its long-continued popularity of nearly a hundred years. Later on the lovely and entrancing strains of "*Dolores*" and "*Chantilly*," with their modern successors, "*Rêve d'Automne*," and "*Valse Bleue*," (to name a very few examples), written in a minor key to convey a subdued undercurrent of passionate regret, seem to be responsible for its never-failing vogue! It has now become a slow and graceful gliding movement, and all other dances are merely accessories to it.

## English Country Dances

The *Quadrille* has been already described under French Dances.

The *Lancers* were invented by Laborde of Paris, in 1836, and brought to England in 1850.

The *Galop* is a Hungarian Dance, first seen in Paris in 1830.

The *Polka* has become universal and very popular in England.

The *Polka-Mazurka* and *Mazurka*, are now only taught in dancing-schools, together with the *Schottische*, *Caledonian Quadrille*, and other exotics.

Of course some innovations like the Two-Step, Washington Post, or "Pas de Quatre," borrowed from the United States, may be the rage for a season or two, but young England has declared its preference for the waltz before all, mixed with occasional galops and polkas; sometimes a set or two of quadrilles and Lancers, or a cotillon, occurs during the evening. These, however, are changed so frequently for the waltz during the course of the programme (except the cotillon, which is an elaborate affair) that it is difficult to anticipate a time when the latter will have either a rival or a successor.

During the reigns of the Georges, public dancing-rooms became the fashion. The



THE CYPRIAN'S BALL AT THE ARGYLE ROOMS

After an Engraving by ROBERT CRUIKSHANK



## Sir Roger de Coverley

Pantheon was frequented even by Dr. Johnson, and other famous assembly rooms were White's, Almack's, Boodles', and Ranelagh.

"Sir Roger de Coverley" may be described as the last of the Old English dances. It is so arranged that, if carried to a conclusion, every dancer will have danced with every other in the room. The music was first published in 1685.

Dancing from an educational standpoint has become universal in England. It has played an important part in physical development, as it not only improves, refines, and strengthens the body, but it exhilarates the mind and the whole nervous system. This idea was embodied by Froebel in his Kindergarten system, which has had such a tremendous influence upon the education of the English children of to-day.

The revival of the Morris dances has produced already a great effect in our country schools. The children enjoy them thoroughly, and perform them gracefully. The Esperance Club, under the tutelage of Miss Neal, has done a good work in spreading this form of culture throughout the country, and Miss Nellie Chaplin has also had success in promoting the revival of ancient dances, especially among children.

The "skirt-dance," which was the rage in

## English Country Dances

society a few years ago, did much to elicit the grace and self-confidence desirable among well-bred girls. Almost every girl out of her teens was equipped with an accordian-pleated skirt, in which she was taught to pirouette gracefully while manipulating its ample folds with dexterity, so as to produce harmonious lines. The figures of various flowers were imitated, and the ball-room threatened to rival the stage for a short time, so fashionable did skirt-dances become. The various dancing and acting games now taught in schools, have done much to take away from the young English girl the reproach of stiffness and awkwardness which had clung to her for so long in the eyes of our continental neighbours.

The growing generation of young people have infinitely more charm, *aplomb*, and ease of manner, than was possible in the past, before dancing, gymnastics, and sports had become the heritage of every boy and girl of nearly all classes in the land.

## MORRIS DANCES

The Puritan reaction is thus described :—  
These teach that dancing is a Jezebel  
And barely break the ready way to hell ;

## Morris Dances

The Morrice idols, Whitsun ales, can be  
But profane relicts of a Jubilee ;  
These in a zeal t'express how much they do  
The Organs hate, have silenc'd bag-pipes too,  
And harmless maypoles all are railed upon  
As if they were the towers of Babylon.

(*Randolph's Poems.* 1646.)

The English Morris Dance, which is supposed to be of Moorish origin, was probably brought to this country in the reign of Edward III., when John of Gaunt returned from Spain. Instructions are given in the "*Orchésographie*" of Thoinot Arbeau, for performing the first steps of the "*Danse des Morisques.*" A boy in good society would come into the hall when supper was finished, with his face blackened, his forehead bound with white or yellow taffetas, and bells affixed to his ankles. The boy then proceeded to dance the Morisque in the manner described. The great feature of the movement was to strike the right and left heels upon the ground twice alternately, and then both heels together, to produce a jingling of the bells. This is the original form of Morris Dance. The English performance included a Robin Hood, a Maid Marian, and a Friar Tuck; and to these were added a musician, a buffoon,

## English Country Dances

and a hobby-horse. These old English dances, of which many varieties exist (chiefly acting, or miming figures) are revived with great success at the present day. Although formerly done entirely by boys and men, they are now performed by school-girls, and the costumes chosen are the old English print frocks and sun-bonnets of a hundred years ago. The old English tunes and words to them are also used, and others are successful imitations.

The Morris Dance is a comic representation of every grade of society. The characters were dressed partly in English and partly in Spanish costume. Thus the huge sleeves were Spanish, but the laced stomacher English. Hobby-horse represented the King and all the knightly order : Maid Marian, the Queen ; the Friar, the clergy generally ; the Fool, the court jester. Other characters represented were a franklin, or private gentleman ; a churl or yeoman ; and the lower grades by a clown. The Spanish costume was to show the origin of the dance. Bells attached to straps were invariably worn round the ankles, the original intention of this having been to frighten away evil spirits.

Tom Piper is one of the characters in the Morris Dance :—

## Morris Dances

"So have I seen  
Tom Piper stand upon our Village Green  
Backed with the May-pole."

(*"Shepherd's Pipe,"* 1614.  
*William Brown.*)

"As you pipe I must dance" (I must accommodate myself to your wishes); "Pipe another tune," (to change one's bearing); "He that pays the Piper can call the tune"—these are all phrases which have passed into the language.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin, that mediæval Orpheus, who decoyed away all the children of the town, is a typical character.

Morris Dances were originally performed by six dancers, but there was also a solo Morris, which was once danced by a man named Kemp in nine days all the way from London to Norwich. It was called the "nine daies Wonder" (1599).

A feature in the history of Morris-dancing is that in the elder days the Morris-dancers became mixed up with the Mummers, who played the Robin Hood games on such occasions as the Leet-Ales, Lamb-Ales, Bride-Ales, &c. The characters were identical, *i.e.*, a Bishop (or Friar), Robin Hood, the Potter (or Beggar), Little John, Friar Tuck, and Maid

## English Country Dances

Marian. The Morris Dancers in the stained glass windows of the sixteenth century in a house at Betley, Staffordshire, have among them other characters.

The following phrases from Ben Jonson's "Gipsies Metamorphosed" supply evidence :—

"*They should be Morris Dances by their jingle,  
but they have no napkins.*"

"*No, nor a Hobby-Horse.*"

"*Oh, he's often forgotten, that's no rule, but  
there's no Maid Marian, no Friar among them,  
which is the surer mark.*"

"*Nor a fool, that I can see.*"

The Hobby-Horse was habitually associated with the Morris, until banished by the Puritans. "For O, for O, the Hobby-Horse is forgot"; but at Minehead and Padstow it survives, and accompanies the original Morris-men at Bideford.

A sword-bearer sometimes accompanied the Morris-men, holding a pound-cake on the end of his sword, with which he parted in slices for sundry coin. The music generally used was a pipe and taborer, or the bag-pipes.

An old madrigal of 1600, runs :—

"*Harke, Harke, I hear the dancing  
And a nimble Morris prancing,*



ROSITA MAURI IN THE BALLET OF LA KORRIGANE

After a Picture by F. E. BERTHIER



## Morris Dances

The bag-pipe, and the Morris-bells,  
That they are not farre hence, us tells.  
Come let us goe thither  
And dance like friends together."

The dress of the Bideford Morris-men at the present day consists of a tall hat, with a broad band of plaited ribbons, red, green, and white; an elaborately-frilled and pleated white shirt, tied at wrist and elbow with blue ribbon; breeches of fawn-coloured corduroy, with rosettes pinned on the braces, back and front, of red, white, and blue ribbons. The Morris-bells are stitched on thongs, and tied to the shin in the traditional manner. The records show that treble and tenor bells were used; the number varies, but sometimes is as many as twelve. Some dancers carry white handkerchiefs, with a hole through one corner. Stocks are used in some dances also.

Some of the best-known tunes are :—

Green Garters	Handsome John
Constant Billy	Highland Mary
Willow Tree	Green Sleeves
Maid of the Mill	Trunk Hose
Bob and Joan	Cockey Brown
The Old Road	Moll o' the Wheel
The Cuckoo	The Cuckoo's Nest
White Jock	Hey Morris.

## English Country Dances

*MASQUES.*—Masques, so fashionable in England from the time of Henry VIII to that of James I, were a spectacular or theatrical set of dances. It was essential that they should be of an allegorical or mythological character. Their gorgeousness has never been paralleled. Kings, Queens, and nobles took part in them, arrayed in the most sumptuous costumes. They corresponded, in England, to the ballet in France.

A masque danced at the wedding of the Earl of Somerset and Lady Frances Howard, in 1613, was called “The Golden Tree.” It represented a story of certain knights who were shipwrecked and then enchanted, and who could only be released by a branch from the tree of gold. Jigs and sarabands, pavanes and galliards were introduced. Another, called the “Vision of Twelve Goddesses,” was composed by Samuel Daniel, and given at Hampton Court in 1604. It was “dramatic, festive, and singularly joyous.”

“The Masque of Flowers,” held at Gray’s Inn in 1614, and revived with almost its original splendour in 1887, was prepared from designs by Inigo Jones. Dancing of the minuet, the pavane, and the morisco occurred during its performance. Ben Jonson wrote a great number of masques ; he is responsible for

## Masques

the “Masque of Beauty,” the “Masque of Blackness,” the “Masque of Qucens,” “Hue and cry after Cupid,” &c.

The greatest authority on English dances is John Playford, who in 1651 wrote the *Dancing Master*, which went into many editions. He reprints an immense number of old tunes, such as : “Chelsea Reach,” “Dargason,” “Kemp’s Jigg,” “Heartsease,” &c.

*Each step trod out a lover's thought,  
And the ambitious hopes he brought  
Chained to her brave feet with such arts,  
Such sweet command and gentle awe,  
As, when she ceased, we sighing saw  
The floor lay paved with broken hearts.*

*So did she move, so did she sing,  
Like the harmonious spheres that bring  
Unto their rounds their music's aid ;  
Which she performéd such a way  
As all the enamoured world will say,  
“ The Graces dancéd, and Apollo played ! ”*

RICHARD LOVELACE.

## THE BALLET

THE Ballet is said to have been invented in China many thousands of years ago. However, although mentioned by Confucius, we have not any authentic account of this very early ballet. It no doubt resembled the ancient pantomime performances common to all nations, from which arose many of the dances flourishing in our own time.

The Ballet, from which our modern Ballet is descended, may be said to have originated in Rome, at the period of the Empire, when Pantomime was at its height. The Roman Ballets and pantomimes were so magnificent, recruited as they were from all the most famous dancers of Greece, Egypt and Spain, that there seems little doubt that they have never been surpassed, even in modern times. Lucian describes the qualifications of a really fine dancer and ballet-master. He says that to grace, elegance and refinement, a ballet master should add all that is great and valuable in knowledge : "Poetry was necessary to ornament, music to animate, geometry to regulate, and philosophy to guide his compositions. Rhetoric was required to enable him to move and express the passions, painting to delineate attitudes, and sculpture to form his figures. He should equal Apelles,

## The Ballet

and not be inferior to Pheidias. All times should be present to his mind, but most profoundly should he study the emotions of the soul, in order to paint its operations by the movements of the body. His conception should be easy and natural, his mind lively, his ear nice, judgment sound, imagination fertile, taste certain in selecting whatever is proper and necessary to his design. These are rare but indispensable qualifications, with which ancient history, or rather fable, will furnish materials for the most magnificent compositions. He must therefore inform himself of every important event that has happened in the world, from its rising out of chaos to the present time."

(*De Saltat.*)

This passage contains a whole philosophy of dancing, as well as raising it to a supreme height as one of the finest of the fine arts, and we must look to the striking examples of the revival of dancing as a fine art at the present day, to find an equally high ideal expressed.

Cahusac thus comments on Lucian's theory : "Lucian did not require too much of the ballet-masters of his time, as at Rome all great subjects of tragedy and comedy were included in the circle of pantomime. The composers of ballets were there at once poets, musicians and actors ; whereas in our time, the poet is



MONSIEUR VESTRIS



## The Roman Ballet

seldom a musician, the musician never a poet, and the actor neither one nor the other."

As an illustration of the perfection of the Roman ballet, it is said that a King of Pontus, on a visit to Rome in the days of Nero, saw a dancer delineate on the stage the "Labours of Hercules," with such exquisite precision, by gesture only, that after the performance he requested the Emperor to allow him to take the coryphæus back with him to his own country. He explained that he ruled over several barbarian tribes, to whom he utterly failed to make his own ideas comprehensible, but he declared that with such an interpreter, that would now become possible. What a brilliant suggestion for dealing effectively with uncivilised tribute peoples!

The professors of this art were held in such high estimation by the Romans, that actors, on the cessation of a public distribution of corn and wine during a famine, were expressly excepted. The popularity of Bathyllus and Pylades has already been described, and it is not till many centuries later that we have to record such an apotheosis of the ballet.

It seems generally admitted that the revival of the ballet as a fine art, on a sumptuous scale, took place at Tortona, in Italy, to celebrate the marriage between Isabella of Aragon and

## The Ballet

Galeazzo, Duke of Milan. "Every resource that genius and wealth could supply was brought into requisition at this entertainment, when painting, sculpture and music were employed as accessories. The spirit of emulation was awakened, and princes and nobles of neighbouring states and countries all vied with each other in the magnificence of their entertainments, imitating the example of Bergonzo de Botta in producing masterpieces of choric and histrionic skill." (*E. Scott.*)

Catherine de Medicis was responsible for the revival of the Ballet in France. It is said that it was her intention to further enervate the minds of her feeble sons, in order to distract their attention from State affairs. Certain it is that ballets, from this period up to the end of the reign of Louis XIV, became more and more elaborate, intricate, and gorgeous. During the reigns of Louis XIII, XIV, and XV, the ballet was at its zenith. Glorious music was written for it and dances were invented by Rameau, Lully, Corelli, Gluck, Weber, and other great composers. Cardinal de Bourbon gave a famous ballet, in which presents were for the first time exchanged, in 1581. It is said that the custom of giving presents at the cotillon was then begun. Royal personages exchanged silver dolphins and medals and

## Women in The Ballet

branches of coral among themselves. Louis XIV, in his youth, did not disdain to appear in a Ballet of the Seasons, when he took the part of the "*Roi Soleil*," clad in brilliant armour ornamented with silver and gold. Court ballets became the fashion, but the great professional class of ballet dancers had not yet arisen.

The fascination of the steps used in the ballet is due to the idea given, "of much being safely supported upon little." But, if too much stress is laid on this idea, the dancer degenerates into the acrobat. It is clear that spontaneity, grace, and feeling will always be necessary to the ballet. Mere agility is not art, and this is why ordinary ballet-dancing gives so little real pleasure. It is not the "poetry of motion," it is tortuous and often painful to watch, and occasionally seems like the action of some automatic piece of mechanism ; whereas the charm of life and nature should always be present in the best ballet dancing.

The appearance of women in the ballet did not take place until the end of the seventeenth century. They first appeared at the Odéon in a ballet called "*Le Triomphe de l'Amour*," in the reign of Louis XIV. They were then found to add so much charm to the performance, that they were never

## The Ballet

afterwards omitted. Beauchamp, called the “Father of dancing-masters,” was responsible for their introduction, but it has also been attributed to Lully. Beauchamp was succeeded by other celebrated dancing-masters, such as Blondy, Pécour, Duport Dauberval, Gardel, and Marcel. Lord Chesterfield alludes to the latter in the well-known letters to his son.

The immense vogue of dancing at and after this period may be gathered from the fact that Vestris, the famous dancing-master, constantly asserted that himself, Voltaire, and the King of Prussia were the three greatest men in Europe. Another instructor in the art was J. G. Noverre, whom Garrick calls the “Shakespeare of dance.” He composed many ballets, and possessed a lofty ideal of his subject. He and later on, Blasis, are still considered great authorities.

Vestris the elder reached, perhaps, a height to which no male dancer, before or afterwards, ever attained. His grace of movement was so enchanting that he literally held his audience spell-bound, and if any admirer so far forgot himself as to applaud with his hands, while Vestris was dancing, “an instant check was put to his rapture, by a choral hush.” A satiric poem was written to Vestris the younger and published in 1820, called “the Vestriad.”

## Vestrис

The hero is thus described :—

“Vestrис, thy birth Terpsichore approved,  
The Graces nursed thee, and Apollo loved.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Devoid of thought and destitute of care  
His head, self-balanced, seems to swim in air,  
Whilst true, responsive to each note, the feet  
And the round calves the *entrechat* repeat.  
The sole forth darting with intrepid haste  
Describes swift circles, with peculiar taste.  
The quick revolve would threat to turn the  
brain,  
Were dancers' heads less voluble and vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Thus at a distance from the brindled flock  
High bounds the mountain doe from rock to  
rock ;  
Thus fleet Camilla skimmed the watery plain,  
Nor left upon the liquid glass a stain.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Full fifteen journals of two columns each  
Where arts are sermonised, and critics preach,  
The evening's triumph every morn prolong,  
In praise harinonious and prosaic song :  
The Apotheosis now by fate decreed,  
All Paris ratified the solemn deed.”

The poem closes with a description of a

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mimic battle between the hero and his rival and successor, Duport, in the guise respectively of Ulysses and Ajax, and of the eclipse of Vestris.

One of the Vestris family took part with Mlle. Carmargo in Gluck's ballet "Iphigenia in Aulis," and in "Hero and Leander," when for the first time in history the lady wore the conventional short stiff ballet-skirt. Mlle. Camargo was one of the wonders of the age. She was born at Brussels and her father was a dancing-master. In her cradle it was prophesied that she would become one of the world's greatest dancers, because of the rhythmical way in which she responded to the strains of a violin. She showed at ten years of age signs of fulfilling the prophecy, and at sixteen she appeared in opera, and charmed all hearts by her grace and vivacity, though in private life she is said to have been "sadness itself." People fought for places to see her, as they had previously fought to see Mlle. Sallé. She became the rage of Paris, and all ladies wished to be shod "*à la Camargo*," thereby making the fortune of a certain shoemaker. She revolutionised the ballet by her fanciful and ingenious improvisations. She was fickle in her love affairs. Married at 18 to the Comte de Melun, she soon left him for his cousin, Lieut. de Marteille. This

## The Three Graces

brilliant officer was killed in Flanders, and Camargo left the stage for six years. She retired finally in 1741, and lived in loneliness and seclusion until her death.

The palmy days of the ballet in England were between 1820 and 1850, the great age of Carlotta Grisi, Taglioni, and Cerito, who were called "the Three Graces." The ballet was then an inseparable adjunct to the Opera. Carlotta Grisi, who impersonated Esmeralda in M. Perrot's opera, founded on the novel of Victor Hugo, "*Notre Dame de Paris*," appeared in 1844. She was one of the most elegant dancers of the period. The fashion then demanded a sylph-like airiness and grace. At the same time Mlle. Adelaide Frassi made her first appearance in this country as Fleur de Lys, and M. Perrot as Père Gringoire. The production was on a magnificent scale. Another great dancer was Mlle. Cerito, who made a sensation when she appeared in the ballet of "Lalla Rookh" in 1846. This also was composed by Perrot, and was founded on Thomas Moore's poem. It was a gorgeous spectacle, and another famous coryphée took part in it—Louise Taglioni, who danced the "Pas de Neuf" in the last scene with Mlle. Cerito and M. St. Leon. Another wonderful ballet of the same period was "*Les*

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*Métamorphoses*," in which Carlotta Grisi and Paul Taglioni appeared.

Madame Marie Taglioni was considered the finest dancer of the 19th century. Born in Stockholm of a celebrated family of dancers, her father and grandfather having been famous before her, she made her début at Vienna in 1822, after undergoing a most rigorous training. Scribe, Auber, and Meyerbeer composed music for her dancing, and Thackeray wrote : " You can never see anything so graceful as Taglioni." She received £100 a night, and hats, gowns, and even stage-coaches were named after her. She married in 1832 Comte Gilbert des Voisins, but they soon separated. She died in 1884 in great poverty at Marseilles, having for some years gained her living by teaching dancing and deportment. Although not beautiful, she had a charm so unique that writers like Balzac and Thackeray have striven to immortalise it.

In 1845 the great *Pas de Quatre* was performed by command of the Queen. It is now almost impossible to realise the *furore* which this immortal ballet, danced by Taglioni, C. Grisi, Cerito, and Grahn, created throughout Europe. In the next year it was followed by the *Pas des Déesses*.

In 1847 another magnificent dancer appeared from Germany—Fanny Elssler, who danced



FANNY CERRITO  
From the Painting by JULES LAURE  
Musée de l'Opéra, Paris



## Adeline Genée

the *Cachuca* to perfection. O. W. Holmes said that her power was "like that of Orpheus with his lute." Though Taglioni's supreme position was then threatened, it was not until the advent of Jenny Lind that singing drove dancing into the second place in opera. After her coming, a popular danseuse exclaimed, "*La Danse est comme la Turquie, bien malade!*" By 1858 the great age of the ballet was over, and it awaited its modern revival.

The successor to the Queens of the legitimate ballet is to be found to-day in Mlle. Adeline Genée. She is a Dane by birth, born in Jutland. Her uncle, Alexander Genée, a ballet-master, and his wife, an Hungarian dancer, were her teachers. When she was three years old, they found she had all the characteristics of a great dancer, and at nine years of age she made her first appearances, at Christiania and at Copenhagen.

A *première danseuse* must practise constant self-denial. She can never indulge in sports, because any exercise except walking and dancing is injurious to a dancer's muscles. Mdlle. Genée practises two hours a day, and rarely takes a holiday, because even two weeks' abstinence from practice hardens the muscles, and causes excruciating pain when dancing is

## The Ballet

resumed. The ballet dancer must also have a specially prepared floor of unpolished wood.

Mdlle. Genée is frequently compared to Taglioni, of whom she is the artistic descendant, as well as of Grisi, Sallé, Camargo and the *premières danseuses* of the past. Even in appearance she resembles Taglioni. Her carefully trained traditional style has nothing in common with the modern representatives of theatrical dancing such as Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Carmençita and Ruth St. Denis, who have re-introduced a more natural and spontaneous style. She may be said to fulfil the description of Camargo in Voltaire's poem, 1730:—

“ Ah Camargo, que vous êtes brillante !  
Mais que Sallé, Grand Dieu, est ravissante !  
Que vos pas sont légers et que les siens sont doux  
Elle est inimitable et vous êtes nouvelle !  
Les nymphes dansent comme vous,  
Et les Graces dansent comme elle ! ”



MARIE TAGLIONI

From a Drawing by A. F. CHALON, R.A.





*“ For lo, the sea that fleets about the land,  
And like a girdle clips her solid waist,  
Music and measure both doth understand :  
For his great crystal eye is always cast  
Up to the moon, and on her fixéd fast :  
And as she danceth in her pallid sphere,  
So danceth he about the centre here.”*

*“ Sometimes his proud green waves in order set,  
One after other flow unto the shore,  
Which when they have with many kisses wet  
They ebb away in order as before.  
And to make known his courtly love the more,  
He oft doth lay aside his three-fork'd mace,  
And with his arms the tim'rous Earth embrace.”*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## MODERN DANCING AND THE REVIVAL OF ANTIQUE DANCING IN MODERN TIMES

DANCING on the stage had become a purely mechanical form of action, a matter of technique and training only, when, a few years ago, it occurred to various original minds in divers countries that dancing was after all, the natural and spontaneous expression in rhythm of the *joie de vivre*, and that, instead of being a stage convention of merely academic excellence, it could be treated as an art. It would be rather difficult to say to whom precisely the credit of this revival is to be attributed. All other arts, such as painting, sculpture, and architecture, have also had their periods of awakening, when some original genius or group of kindred spirits have put warmth and vitality into technique, and reclothed the dry bones of formal accomplishment. It occurs at a time when technical skill has perhaps reached its zenith, and there is no more to be done on these lines, but the breath of life is wanting. The moment arrives, and some Pygmalion breathes life into the marble, and the statue glows and moves. This is what has happened to dancing within

## Modern Dancing

the last few years, and it is resuming its rightful place as a fine art, almost on a level with sculpture, music, and painting.

Each new discoverer in the field has given fresh impetus to the pioneers of the revival, and we have now had, almost simultaneously, the revival of antique dancing as practised by Isadora Duncan and Maud Allan, with their followers and imitators ; the revival of the English Folk-dances, or Morris-dances, which have influenced both town factory-girls, and country school-children, throughout the length and breadth of the land ; and the great revival of the glories of the ballet, as instanced by the Russian troupe of dancers at the Palace Theatre, and those of the Imperial ballet at Covent Garden. So, in obedience to the public demand, lithe young men and beautiful girls, showing in their attitudes and movements all the exquisite grace and charm of the Greek sculptures and vase-paintings, but natural and spontaneous in every gesture, have arisen all over Europe and America.

Dancing bids fair to become anew an inspiration to its sister arts, painting and sculpture, as in the great days of Greece and Rome, for these arts have always acted and re-acted upon one another.

About fifteen years ago there appeared a

## Isadora Duncan

very original and ingenious artist in Loie Fuller, an American, who invented the Serpentine Dance. She was one of the most dexterous and extraordinary of the skirt-dancers, and by means of a voluminous piece of drapery, whirled round with sticks projecting from the hands, she simulated flames of fire, flowers of every kind, and iridescent serpents. Her machinery was simple, but her effects superb. Like Proteus, whirling in her flaming garments, which assumed all kinds of gorgeous colours melting into each other as the limelight played on them, she was alternately a sun-flower, a water-lily, a rose, a butterfly, a humming-bird, a fiery snake, or anything else she wanted to resemble. She had many imitators, but she was supreme amongst them all.

About the same time arose, also in the United States, Isadora Duncan, who conceived the idea that the body could be made to express by its own actions and gestures all the emotions which the most complicated or passionate music could convey. She danced to Chopin, Mendelssohn, and other classical composers, and embodied Botticelli's "Spring," and other great pictures, in her classical dances. She had a theory which she lectured upon and illustrated at the same time, analogous to that of the Delsartian school of expression by

## Modern Dancing

gesture and posture. She founded a school in Berlin, on similar lines, and has a large troupe of young pupils who carry out her ideas.

One of the members of her school, who, however, claims to have originated the revival of the antique style of dancing, is Maud Allan. Maud Allan is a Canadian, who came to study music in Berlin. She gives the whole history of the development of her art in a book entitled "My Life and Dancing," 1908.

She describes Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" as having first suggested to her the idea of a classical dance, on seeing it in the Uffizi in Florence. She was greatly encouraged, in her dreams of inaugurating a new vogue in the classical dance, by Marcel Rémy, a Belgian composer and critic. He encouraged her to study Greek vase-painting, and so to weave the various beautiful poses on the ancient vases into one rhythmic whole, that there should be no perceptible pause between the first pose and the one following it. "It was my endeavour to disperse rhythm harmoniously to the tips of fingers and toes," as she states herself.

She used as her first experiment in drapery an old Greek piece of muslin, about 200 years old, very fine, soft, supple, and clinging, getting the Greek effect into her dresses

## Maud Allan

by damping them and then rolling them up tight to produce lines when unfolded. She made her début at the Royal Conservatoire, Vienna, dancing, in a two hours' programme, pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann. Since then Maud Allan has appeared in most of the principal cities of Europe. She surpasses all other "natural" dancers in her moments of sheer, unpremeditated inspiration, which cause her to resemble a wave of the sea, a flower, a dryad, or a leaf blown by the wind. She embodies the spirit of pure unmitigated joy, and her interpretation of some of Chopin's Waltzes and Mazurkas, of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," and Rubinstein's "Valse Caprice," is "a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever."

Her Salome Dance acquired an immediate reputation, though most critics agreed that it fell below the high artistic level of her other performances. It was quite original, and her interpretation expressed all the vivid feelings of an inexperienced girl called to witness for the first time a fearful crime. This is an analysis of her own account of her conception : Salome was brought up in luxury, a spoilt child. When she first hears what is to be the prize of her dancing, her feeling is sheer triumph. This is succeeded by one of horror.

## Modern Dancing

Then comes repentance and a craving for forgiveness from the man she has so cruelly done to death. The final state of her soul is depicted by her sudden collapse, caused by humiliation, awe, and grief.

Maud Allan inaugurated the use of a natural and simple background of moss-green curtains, and a moss-green carpet on which to dance, thus obtaining an infinitely more artistic effect than by elaborate stage scenery. The dancers whom we may describe as of the æsthetic or classical school, have had a very great effect upon the traditional ballet. The free and joyous dancing of the children and young girls in Miss Marie Brema's recent productions at the Savoy Theatre gave a good example of this, and it is exceedingly interesting to compare the two styles as lately seen together at the Palace Theatre. A French company first appears, dressed all alike in black, white, and flesh tones, the scenery exactly corresponding to their own colour scheme. All is dainty and chic, and weirdly, even abnormally attractive, like a drawing by Aubrey Beardsley, but their dancing, light and graceful as it undoubtedly is, never leaves the conventional path as traced out by centuries of ballet dancers. It is highly sophisticated, and an artificial product in every way. A few minutes

## Russian Dancing

later, and the Russian Dancers appear, bringing with them the indescribable breeziness, the natural joy and abandon of the dance, as it must have existed among the Greeks, and of which the Slavonic peoples alone now appear to possess the secret. The Mazurka by Glinka is danced with a fervour, a wild and apparently untutored grace, which carries one away on a great wave of rapture. “O, the wild joys of living,” one quotes, forgetting that these are professionals, and that their artless joy is in reality a very high form of art. Even before Michael Mordkin and Anna Pavlova appear, there is altogether a new atmosphere which the mysterious and beautiful scenery helps to create. When Michael Mordkin springs on to the stage like a veritable faun, it is the Golden Age again, and all the wild panther-like leaps and cat-like bounds, the clashing of the cymbals, the inexpressible symmetry of the sculptured figure, take one straight into Arcady, when the world was young :—

“ A little child, a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself,  
A fairy thing with red round checks,  
Which always finds and never seeks.”

We were all there once—long ago.

## Modern Dancing

Mordkin never loses his faun-like grace, whether as lover, as gipsy, or as the god of the golden bow, but when he first appears as the faun himself at play, he is unique and unsurpassed.

Anna Pavlova is a link between the old ballet and the new. She executes many of the traditional steps clad in her short skirts, and with an extraordinary amount of work on tip-toe. But she can also create a new and passionate thrill when she assumes the characters of the "*Rose qui meurt*," and "*le Cygne*," and in Chopin's waltzes and variations her action is pathetic, and she is as if blown by storms of passion until she must perforce sink to earth in utter lassitude.

A beautiful description may be taken from a contemporary :—

"The music was a Rubinstein waltz. She wore some gauzy dress suffused with violet and green. Her dancing was the very spirit of Spring, all lilting, and thrilling, and throbbing fresh delight. . . . Each gesture, each glance of her laughing eyes made a perfect harmony. The whole dance was as delicious as a perfect lyric in its gay spontaneity, and its impeccable beauty of detail. A subtler piece of work was the Bacchanal Dance to

## Pavlova and Mordkin

Glazounov's music. When Pavlova ran upon the stage with her partner, the flame-coloured veil waving about them, wreathed with vine-leaves and grapes, when the wild music clashed, and the dancers flung themselves to and fro in wild abandon, it was easy to fancy that the mad revels of Dionysos had come back to our world with the old conquering appeal."

(*Daily Telegraph.*)

Another paper says :—

" It is something of a revelation to find that in a country like Russia, where the civilised arts and sciences are supposed to make slow headway, the art of the dancer has reached its apotheosis. It is surprising to learn that to Russia more than to any other country the theatre owes the preservation of the Italian school of dancing—the Classical school—in its original purity." (*Morning Leader.*)

All contemporary critics agree that Pavlova does not dance with the limbs alone. She has the power of throwing her whole personality into her dancing. Her face expresses all the emotions and delicate transitions of feeling expressed by the dance. She is not merely a human being going through certain evolutions ; she is, with Mordkin, her complete counterpart, the very spirit of the dance itself. " He is an

## Modern Dancing

ancient statue come to life, fired with the passion of centuries. She is the symbol of life and femininity, and of beauty, which is the soul of life."

But one cannot close any account of these Russian dancers without mentioning the idyllic beauty of Liszt's Rhapsodie Hongroise, which eight of the company interpret. One can only say that until one has seen it so expressed, one has never fully comprehended it. The whole company are altogether worthy of the two stars of first magnitude whom they support.

A well known writer on the subject, Marcelle Azra Hincks, says :—

"The Russian dancers . . . . have solved this problem of the dance. For within the given form of the ballet, whilst adhering strictly to the rigid rules of their art, they possess the emotional and expressive qualities which Noverre and Blasis and the founders and systematisers of the ballet, in the eighteenth century, deemed essential to the dance."

To cap the climax, the latest revelation of all in the art of dancing was provided by the Russian Imperial Ballet at Covent Garden in June, 1911. This company act in dancing dramas in an incomparable manner. They are dominated by Nijinsky, who is described as the "greatest male dancer of his age."

## Nijinsky

“His precision, his agility, his balance are all admirable, but it is in the beauty of his postures that he excels. Every pose is a picture of grace, of exquisite line. . . . Nijinsky lives every character he portrays, whether he is lovesick Narcissus straining in frenzied passion over the pool’s still waters, . . . whether he is the negro slave dying in long shuddering spasms at the feet of the Sultana, whose love cost him his life. In Petrouchka he succeeds in conveying with extraordinary success the staccato movements of a puppet, while subtly suggesting that the marionette’s wooden body conceals somewhere beneath its motley, a heart slowly breaking over Petrouchka’s little love for the pretty dancing doll. The puppet’s despair . . . is strangely pathetic. He flings his jointless little arms over his head, and drops headlong over the waist . . . and the bitter anguish on the wooden features, which the white chalk and scarlet dabs of paint seem to accentuate!”

A delicate little drama is the “Spectre of the Rose,” which Nijinsky acts with Karsavina as his partner,—a dainty brunette—to Berlioz’s arrangement of Weber’s “*Invitation à la Valse*”:—

“A young girl in a quaint 1860 dress, with a crinoline, returned from a ball, falls asleep

## Modern Dancing

with a rose in her hand. As she slumbers, the spirit of the flower appears, his head a rosebud, his supple form wreathed with roses. And he dances and pirouettes about the sleeping form as only Nijinsky can dance, and the maid awakens to join him. As she sinks to slumber again, the spectre flits away, and when he has vanished, the girl, awakening, presses her lips to the rose which has fallen to the ground."

(*The Daily Mail.*)

The same paper says :—

" All over Northern Europe the ballet still reigns, except in Norway, where they prefer more solid theatrical entertainments. In Italy, too, it is kept up, and in Paris ballets often supplement operas. But Russia has the finest ballets and the finest dancers. The best of her composers have written ballet music. So when you see a Russian ballet, you see the best thing of its kind the world has to offer."

It was in "Le Pavillon d'Armide" that the Imperial Russian Ballet made their début in London. The setting was "a perfect Fragonard"; Nijinsky is described as "touching ground again with the lightness of a bubble." Schumann's "Carnival" was also danced to a "charming décor of a curtain half purple-blue, half black, with an audacious design of cockle-

## The Russian Ballet

shells." The dancing, the music, and the scenery perfectly corresponded to one another.

Borodin's "Prince Igor" was next acted. Here at last was really Slav music as well as Slav dancers. "It was a fierce and splendid scene as the Tartar warriors, youths, and Slavs dance martially or voluptuously at the Tartar Chief's command, for the entertainment of his noble Slav prisoner, Prince Igor. The décor was remarkable with its rich harmony of sunset red and gold, and smoke from camp fires against a glowing sky." Nijinsky, the Russian premier, is still a boy. He appeared in public in 1897 when he was only six, but has worked very hard at his art for ten years since that date. He describes a scene in which he collaborated with Isadora Duncan, in a palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, when, in a dim mysterious gloom, lit with wax candles, he and she improvised dances before a small audience. Nijinsky is described by another contemporary as "bounding into the air with the light joy of a Mercury with winged heels. No mood is too joyous or exuberant for this strange creature to express it with his gambols of incredible grace and agility. He seems half boy, half bird. No words can tell the airy gaiety of his leaping feet. He looks the realisation of some flight-gifted elf or faun."

*"Lo, this is Dancing's true nobility :  
Dancing, the child of Music and of Love ;  
Dancing itself both love and harmony,  
Where all agree, and all in order move ;  
Dancing the art that all arts do approve :  
The fair character of the world's consent,  
The heav'n's true figure, and th'earth's ornament."*

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

## FINALE

FROM the dances of all ages, and especially from the famous dancers who sum up in their own persons all the respective qualities of pose, gesture, buoyancy and grace, which each age has produced in varying proportions, some philosophy of the subject must finally be extracted.

The similes drawn from Nature, the still higher suggestions of great art, ought to help us here. The magic influence of dancing on the mind, rousing it from stagnancy, torpor, lethargy, and even despair, is of much the same essence as that produced by a leaf scurrying round and round in its mad autumnal whirl, blown by the wind ; of a little boat tossing at anchor on a stormy sea ; of a bird swaying and curving in circular flight ; of a butterfly hovering over summer flowers ; of a young animal leaping and bounding with unconscious grace. The charm is not merely rhythmic, for rhythm alone would become monotonous if prolonged. There must further be a sensation of unexpectedness, of precarious balance, of poise which has only a momentary existence, of risk which delights the soul ; an impression of something which is, but in one moment might cease to be, like very fragile Venetian glass.

## Finale

which a touch could crumble and dissolve into nothingness.

The essence of life is ever that magical moment of symmetry which bewilders and dazzles, that glimpse of perfection which like a vapour “ appeareth but a little time, and then vanisheth away.” How could any permanency give a feeling of perfect happiness in a world of which the whole gist is eternal change ? “ All things are changes, not into nothing, but into something which is not at present ”—so says Marcus Aurelius, and the universe itself, which is always *becoming*, but never *being*, bears him out. The Dance typifies, not only harmony, not only joy, but that flashing iridescence of existence which refreshes us, when one special sensation, often repeated, will pall even in its very beauty and perfection. Nature knows so well the secret charm of perpetual change that she gives us skies that always vary, seasons which glide in and out of one another like the colours in shot silk, and Life in all her myriad moods, to which Death adds poignancy and zest. We sometimes imagine that we want an eternal repose, an everlasting sameness, but Nature wisely gives us Joy and Sorrow, Night and Day, Life and Death, knowing that, like fretful children, we should weary of anything that is secure. God

## Eternal Change

Himself would weary us if He were always the same. In contrast, in duality, in perpetual variety, in apparent dissonance, in seeming strife, the real harmony, the true unity, the ever-abiding Source of Being conceals itself, that we may love it all the more because we never see it, never grasp it, and only comprehend what it is by the experience of that which it is not.



## LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE DANCE

THE great revival of dancing as described in the foregoing pages, has led in the years 1911-1914 to a still greater and more widespread vogue. Even the frequenters of the fashionable drawing-room and ball-room, have been swept along on the great wave of this revival, and in France, England, and the United States a fresh impetus, not wholly, but in part, connected with the Stage, has produced the *Tango*, the *Maxixe Brésilienne* and the *Ta-Tao*. No manual on dancing is complete without a description of these developments, which have resulted in an immense demand among young men and girls in all ranks of society for competent teachers of these new and graceful dances. For undoubtedly they are graceful, when properly danced, in spite of alarmed protests on the part of both Church and State, when certain exaggerations and vulgarities came to be connected with their names.

But it must be candidly admitted that the *Tango*, notwithstanding that it can lend itself to an unrefined treatment, is a beautiful and graceful dance, whose chief fault is, that it is almost too complicated for the drawing-room

## Latest Developments

and that its exponents suffer from a somewhat anxious expression of countenance indicative rather of struggle than of joy. All the reproaches formerly heaped upon the waltz have been latterly showered on this dance, but it is fairly certain that it has come to stay, and that a *Thé Dansant*, or *Diner Dansant* would be incomplete without a *Tango* or a *Maxixe Brésilienne*, its successor.

The increased number of society dances in the United States alone during the past year, has resulted in an enormous development in the silk trade. The silk dresses required for "Tango Teas" have been responsible for many millions more yards of silk than were ever before imported into that country. All countries during the past winter have kept themselves warm and lively with "Tango Teas." These are held more often than not in large hotels in London and on the Continent. A fixed charge is made for admission including tea, and a couple of young professionals engaged, who usually start the dances, a full programme of One-step and Two-steps being those most frequently desired, with a "Tango" or other dance of that nature interspersed to break the monotony.

The modern fashion in dress and hats has been largely modified and even dictated by

## Dancing Masters in Conference

“Tango Teas.” Small close hats, and a simple compact style of hairdressing, a close-fitting skirt, and loose-fitting blouse, with conspicuously neat shoes and stockings, have become universal at these dances. The movement is arrow-like, the motions of the body willowy and lithe, and exhibit the tendency of frequent dancing to produce slim, graceful figures. Even women in middle life have resumed their “dancing days,” and men of course have followed suit. The effect on health and spirits is said to be most beneficial and salutary.

*The Times* of April 13, 1914, stated that the dancing-masters of most of the European countries, and the United States, met in conference in Paris at Easter, to deliberate for the good of their profession. This is the first international congress of teachers of the dance which has ever been held, and its purpose is to settle for all countries the dances which shall be danced and the way in which they shall be danced. The leading spirit of the conference is M. Lefort, the inventor of the *Ta-Tao*, and he has collected about him some forty or fifty colleagues of both sexes, all conscious of the importance of their high calling, and awake to the responsibilities which rest upon their shoulders as tutors of the civilised races in elegance and grace.

## Latest Developments

It seems generally accepted that some form of the Tango will be the dance of the future, though it is also prophesied that the minuet and other slow and stately dances of the past will be revived. There is a strenuous effort being made on the part of all prominent teachers to suppress unrefined methods of dancing with their accompanying exaggerations and improprieties. It remains for the general public to help them in their praiseworthy efforts to keep up the best traditions of the dance, so as not to provoke a violent reaction against *all* dancing, which has occurred more than once in the history of the dance, as these pages will have shown. What is done in the best society gradually filters down to the lowest stratum, therefore it is as well to take care that the reverse process does not take place. The enemies of the Tango have declared this to be the case, though unjustly, for the Tango is not either a "Nigger" or an "Apache" dance, as has been variously stated, but originated in the Argentine Republic, being an imported dance from Spain, with gipsy elements in it, which accounts for its somewhat sensuous and languid character. It has therefore, ultimately a Moorish or Eastern origin, but when modified to suit Western tastes, it is none the worse on this account.

## Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Castle

Some well-known writers on the dance, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Castle, say that "The Tango correctly practised is the modern soul of dancing, the autocrat of the up-to-date *soirée dansant*. It is not merely a dance, but a style, and it is necessary to absorb its atmosphere in order to dance it correctly. It appears that the Tango is not yet "standardised"; many teachers do not agree as to what are its actual steps, and the great number of steps which it is assumed to possess have had a rather alarming effect on novices.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Castle (who are teachers of a leading society set in New York) have made an attempt to "standardise" the Tango. They regard it as having not more than six principal steps, and declare that the *Cortez*, the *Media Luna*, the *Scissors*, the *Promenade*, and the *Eighth Step* are the most essential ones.

The dancing-masters of London and Paris agree fundamentally with this list, which they give as follows :

The *Promenade*, the *Cortez*, the *Medio Cortez*, the *Media Luna*, the *Rondo*, the *Huit*, the *Pas Oriental*, the *Paseo con golpe*, and the *Scissors*.

It will be seen that there are some additional steps included. The *Dancing Times*, which represents the best London authorities on

## Latest Developments

ball-room dancing, says, quoting from Mr. George Grossmith, that "The Tango is fascinating to dance, and delightful to see—in a room. It is not a stage dance, for it is not spectacular. The endeavour to make it a stage dance generally results in something which is not Tango at all. Just in the same way one might vulgarise the waltz by throwing in all sorts of freak movements, but it would not be the standard waltz."

It should be danced slowly, and with a gliding motion, so as to produce an absolutely smooth effect, without jerking, or any unnecessary movements of the arms or legs. Another writer in the *Dancing Times* speaks enthusiastically of the educative effect of the Tango. "It teaches novices how to hold themselves properly, what to do with their arms, how to execute with dexterity certain steps which they are apt to shuffle through, and finally to take a pride in their dancing." One great influence of the Tango is remarkable. Men have once again become interested in ball-room dancing. The difficulty of getting men to come to dances in sufficient numbers to match the girls is now a thing of the past. The same writer remarks : "The Tango is an ideal dance for the man—he creates the design in it throughout, and in doing this, calls into play mental as well as

## “Furlana”

physical powers, and as he develops a mastery over many divers steps, the more elaborate and interesting to him becomes the designing of the dance. Without holding his partner more closely, his control over her is more complete than in the Waltz.”

As this book is not a guide to dancing, but a history of dancing, I cannot do better than refer my readers to Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Castle’s “Modern Dancing” (Harpers’) for details as to Tango steps.

There are other important modern dances which must be mentioned in this chapter. The Tango has had a forerunner—“the Rag.” Its popularity was immense owing to the fascinating music which was written for it by numerous well-known composers. It is a fast measure, full of briskness and quick movement, and came at a period when dancers were tired of the slow and monotonous waltz measure.

Another new dance, or rather a revival of an old Venetian dance, has lately been introduced called the “Furlana.” The legend goes that the Pope, having seen two of his young relatives dance the Tango by request, because he wished to be able to judge of its propriety himself, is said to have been delighted with it, but to have suggested the “Furlana” as being more lively! It was, however, revived by the

## Latest Developments

dancing masters of Rome, who, surmising that the Pope had banned the Tango, saved the downfall of their trade by starting the “Furlana,” connecting it with this little story. It is thus described by Mr. Crompton : “Originating with the Forlans, inhabitants of Frioul, Italy, it became the favourite dance of the Gondolieri three hundred years ago, and constituted one of the three national dances of Italy. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the dance developed into a more elaborate measure, and eventually showed an equal popularity with the Pavane, Gaillard, Rigaudon, and other similar dances. Special music was composed for the dance by Wm. Byrd, later by Auber, Moret, and Rameau, the most recent composition being that of Giovanni Vinci, in the present year.”

The “Ta-Tao” may be described as a reconstructed Chinese dance, and comprises six figures, as follow :

- (1) Ta-Tao, or the Cadence.
- (2) Ho-ang, or the Phœnix.
- (3) Ta-ou-Hien-Tche, or the Wave (a figure suggestive of the movement of the sea under a gentle breeze).
- (4) Ta-Hyen, the central figure.
- (5) Ta-Kneu, or the Grand Turn.
- (6) Gen-Ou, or the Men’s Dance.

## “Maxixe Brésilienne”

A great success is prophesied for this dance. In many ways it seems the exact opposite of the Tango. The word “Ta-Tao” means in Chinese “Sweetness and harmony”; it is a slow graceful measure, full of quaint steps and languorous dipping movements. M. Lefort says—“It is quite an easy dance to learn, and is essentially an harmonious and delightful measure. The feet move in a one-two measure, and many of the graceful steps seen in the Tango—the balancing on one foot, the slide and dip, with one knee just touching the ground—are included in this old Chinese dance. One of the greatest charms of this dance is its unbroken swing, keeping time to a slow tuneful melody in a minor key. The Ta-Tao can never become a vulgar exhibition of romping.” It must be noted that there is no record of this dance among the archives of China!

It seems generally accepted that the popular successor to the Tango will be the “Maxixe Brésilienne.” As its name implies, it comes from Brazil, and it was introduced into Paris by M. Duque in 1912. It is, as far as execution goes, very much easier than the Tango, and its actual steps can be quickly mastered, but it is far more difficult to dance gracefully. It is probably the only ball-room dance in which strict attention must be paid both to the

## Latest Developments

carriage of the head, and the graceful posturing of the arms. The foundation of it is the well-known Two-step. The Maxixe should be danced very smoothly with the knees slightly bent. The feet should be lifted neatly off the ground, especial care being taken that a smooth movement of the arms is secured when changing from one position to another. The body is swayed to the left if the right foot goes forward, and *vice-versa*. In one figure the partners lift their joined arms together over their heads, and the lady who is dancing in front of the gentleman is brought by this manœuvre to turn and face him, with charming effect. The music is played faster than for the Tango, but not so fast that the twists and turns in which the grace of the dance consists should have a hurried appearance. One of the steps is called the Skating Step, and a good deal of the action is done on the heel of the foot ; during the Skating Step a deep dip is introduced, while a very pretty addition is provided when the couples turn around, change position and continue dancing in the same direction. About a dozen different figures make this dance complete.

There is another variety of the Tango, called the "Innovation." In this dance the partners do not touch each other, but follow the Tango

## “Hesitation” Waltz

figures independently, dancing opposite to each other, and the man guides his partner into fresh figures by means of head and eyes and gestures of the hands and feet. It requires to be much more perfectly danced than when the partners are in contact.

The “Hesitation” Waltz is a new variation of the Boston, the modern favourite form of the Waltz. It is not very easy to explain, but in following good waltz music there are natural pauses or hesitations in the music which must be corresponded to by sympathetic dancers in the dance, and this appears to be the gist of it, but a fixed alternative of dancing and hesitating—dancing and hesitating—is to be avoided at all costs.

The “Lame Duck” Waltz is another variation of the “Hesitation” form of the Waltz, introduced from America, and said to be most fascinating, and very easily learnt.

Leaving drawing-room dances, and returning once more to the classic home of the dance—the ballet—there is still something left to chronicle within the last few months.

The legitimate *re-créatrice* of the ballet was Adeline Genée, and to the sorrow of her many admirers, she is on the eve of her retirement from the stage. The history of the Empire Theatre in London has of late years been chiefly

## Latest Developments

a chronicle of the successes of Adeline Genée in such exquisite productions as the "Sylvia" and "Coppélia" of Délibes, the "Faun" and "Dryad" of Miss Dora Bright, and of her immediate successors—first, Miss Lydia Kyasht and later Miss Phyllis Bedells, who is described in one paper as "the hope of England." Miss Lydia Kyasht is a beautiful and charming woman of Russian birth. She was trained at the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, and although entirely without the vehemence and abandon associated with Russian Dancers, she possesses *au fond* the same technique. She has a finely formed and balanced figure, and when Mdlle. Genée went to the United States, immediately assumed that favourite dancer's *rôles* with most brilliant success. Miss Phyllis Bedells, the incarnation of English girlhood, in its youth, beauty and joy, after first taking minor *rôles*, has succeeded Miss Lydia Kyasht, now that the latter has left for the United States in her turn, and does not compare unfavourably with either of her two famous predecessors. Her revival of the Shakespearean ballet is considered most artistic, and her "Titania" in its lovely setting, a dream of grace and charm.

Excellent schools of children's dancing are coming to the front in an almost bewildering

## “Children’s Welfare Exhibition”

variety. It is difficult to chronicle so many new and rapid developments, but those of Mme. Loie Fuller, Miss Margaret Morris, Miss Lilah Field and Miss Susie Boyle should certainly be mentioned. The “Children’s Welfare Exhibition” (1914), gave demonstrations of children’s dancing, comprising some 400 performers, and the new School of Eurhythms founded by M. Jacques Dalcroze, which has had such an enormous success, also gave exhibitions of their skill.

Among individuals we must single out that charming child-genius, Miss Edris Stannus (known on the stage as *Ninette de Valois*). Born of a good Irish family, she has no need, except for the passionate love of her art, to appear on the stage, but she is glowing to the finger-tips with all the enthusiasm of the artist, added to the unconscious charm and simplicity of the child.

Those who have seen her interpretation of Chopin’s Waltzes, and those of Rubenstein, have a memory which is ideal in its combination of childlike innocence with artistic perfection of form. It has been summed up in a criticism once made of her—“The child is a poem.”

Miss Joan Sawyer holds a unique position among American dancers. She has danced very

## Latest Developments

little outside of New York yet, but she has gained a national reputation. In New York, where she has only been dancing for a little over two years, she has opened the "Persian Garden" as an after-theatre resort, which, from the opening night, January 29th, 1914, has been the favourite dancing place of New York's fashionable society. Its success was immediate and continued.

As a waltzer, Miss Sawyer stands pre-eminent. She has invented a waltz which she named *The Aeroplane* because of certain flying effects introduced in it. Her own "hesitation waltz," *The Joan*, is also very popular.

Miss Sawyer has been called by the newspapers "The Tango Queen," because she helped to make that much discussed dance possible in drawing rooms. The popularity of the *Maxixe* also, in the United States, is largely due to her interpretation of its grace and buoyancy. Miss Sawyer has recently revived the Minuet and the once popular Varsouienne with much success. Into the Minuet she introduces a waltz number which gives it a pretty and modern touch.

There is nothing acrobatic or sensational about Miss Sawyer's dancing. Unusual grace, refinement and distinction are its characteristics.

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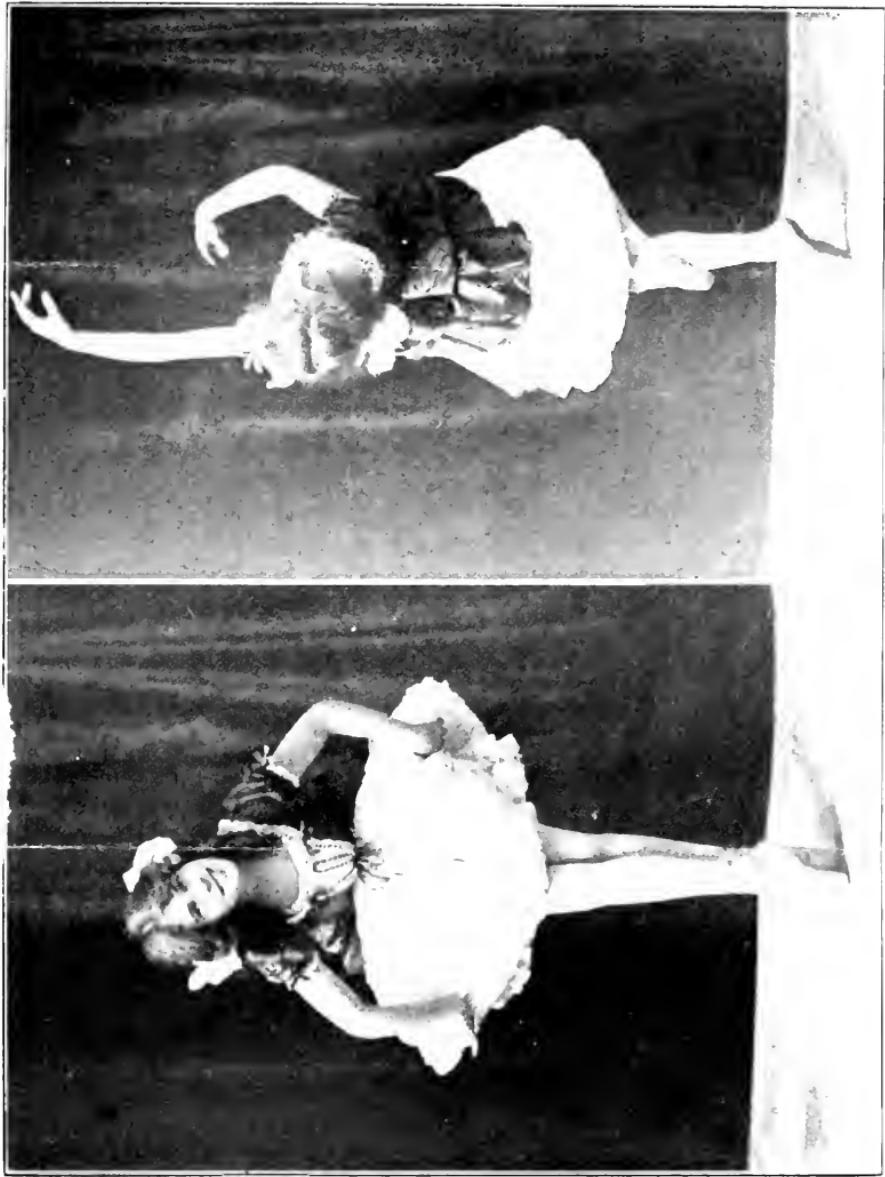








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